The Original Custom Bike Magazine

BACK STREET HEROES

JUNE 2025
ISSUE #494

MORTAGUA FIGHTER

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FINNISH SHOVEL

GSX-R STREETFIGHTER

BEAUTIFUL BSA

ENGRAVED SPORTY

PATINA PAN

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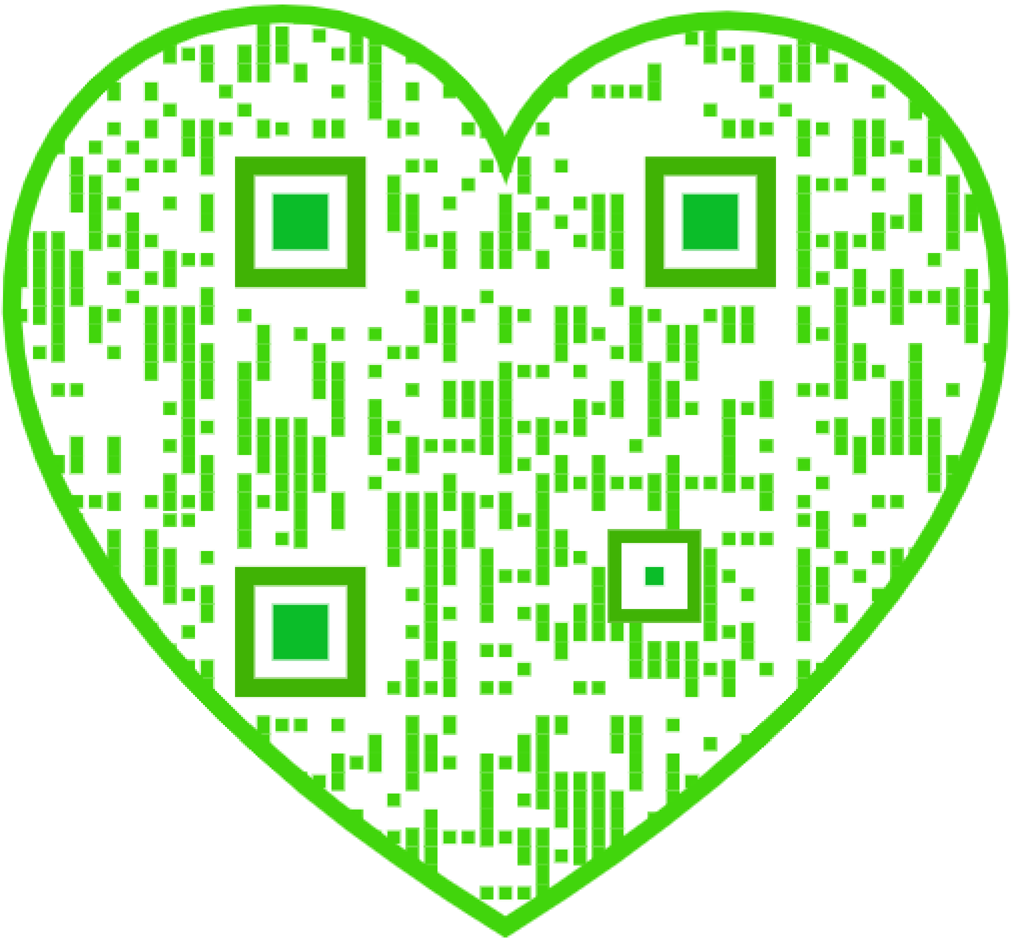
STORMIN' THE CASTLE

HA KENT YARD PARTY

THE TRIP OUT

CALSTOCK BIKE SHOW



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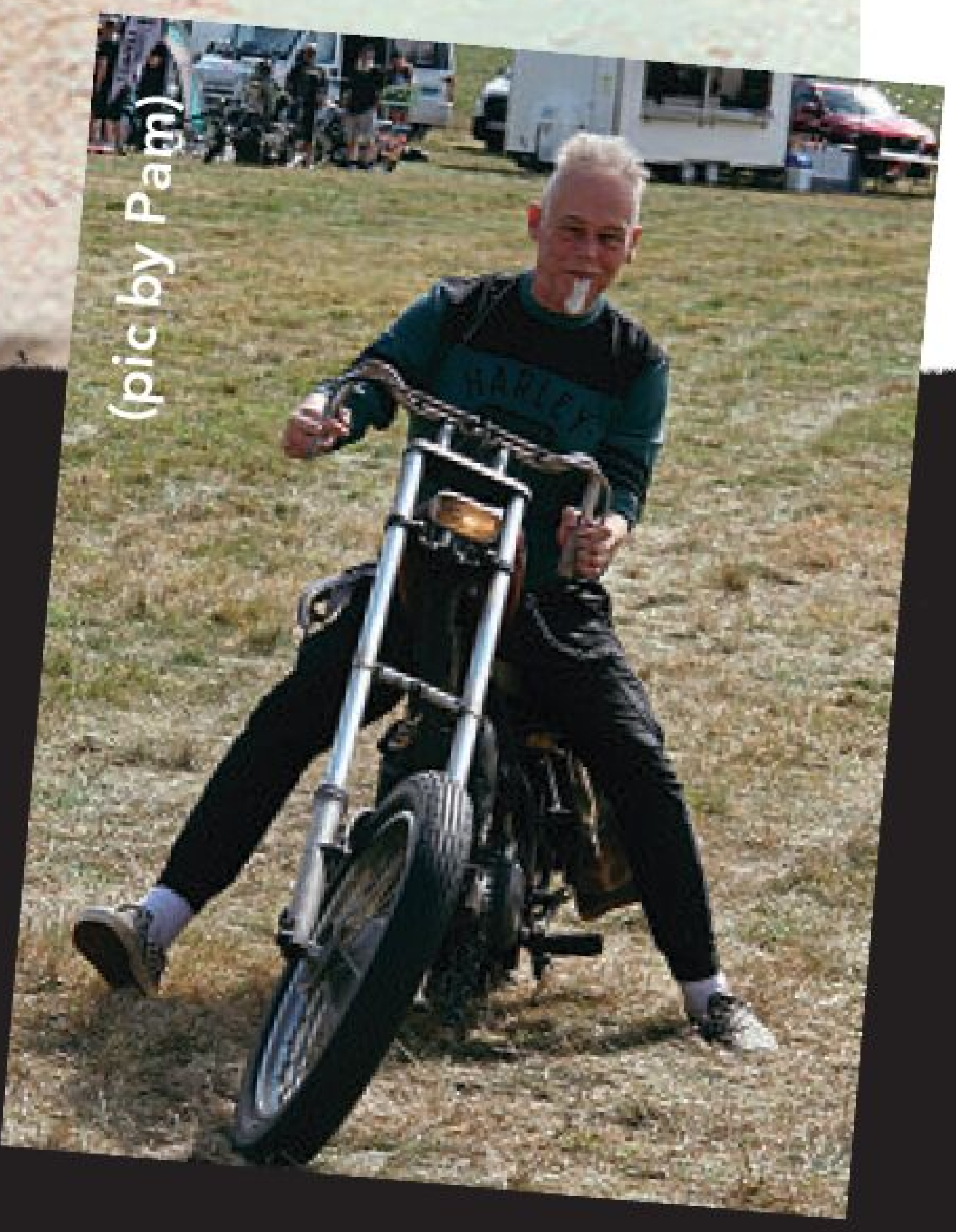

(pic by Pam)

Hello, and welcome to this new issue of BSH!

Scanning idly through Facebook a while ago, I found a pretty good explanation of why we, as bikers, do what we do. I started reading it, changing it about a bit, adding a bit here, taking away a bit there, cos that's what we editor types do, and ended up pretty much rewriting it as the Americanness (I'm guessing) of it didn't really fit with us lot over 'ere.

"I can't really tell you why I first wanted a motorcycle all those years ago, or why I still want one now, but I can tell you that, since owning a bike, my life's so, so much better. Yes, I get wet, I get cold, I've been afraid, and I've hurt myself more times than I care to remember, but I've also seen wonderful places, and met and become friends with perfect strangers, some of who I might only see very occasionally, but when we do meet up again it's like we've never been apart – that's the bond these things give you.

"They're also good for your head; I might go out boiling with frustration, but always return with a feeling of peace – I leave the troubles and cares of the world behind, even just temporarily, and I feel I'm a better person for doing so. My bike is, often, the one constant in my life; people come and go, but it keeps me on the straight n' narrow, keeps my head straight, and as I sail through lines of stationary or slow-moving traffic, dodge through cities, or swing into a country bend, I feel alive, completely alive. I've laughed out loud in the wind, talked to myself a thousand times (and still do), sang and shouted with joy like a madman and, yes, sometimes I've cried. Yes, I know how dangerous they can be, but the benefits far outweigh the risks, and it's my life I'm risking – I'm willing to take those risks because, if I didn't, I wouldn't be me. I've stood in courts and faced up to the powers-that-be, and mostly lost against 'em, but I've still stood up for what I hold dear, and I have, and still do, spend money I don't have on 'em. I've given up (many) things other people consider essential to keep it on the road, but it's all been worth it – it's not really a means of transportation, it's something that I'm blessed with, it's part of who I am. And one day, when I'm too old to ride anymore, I'll stand it in my garage as a trophy of my life."

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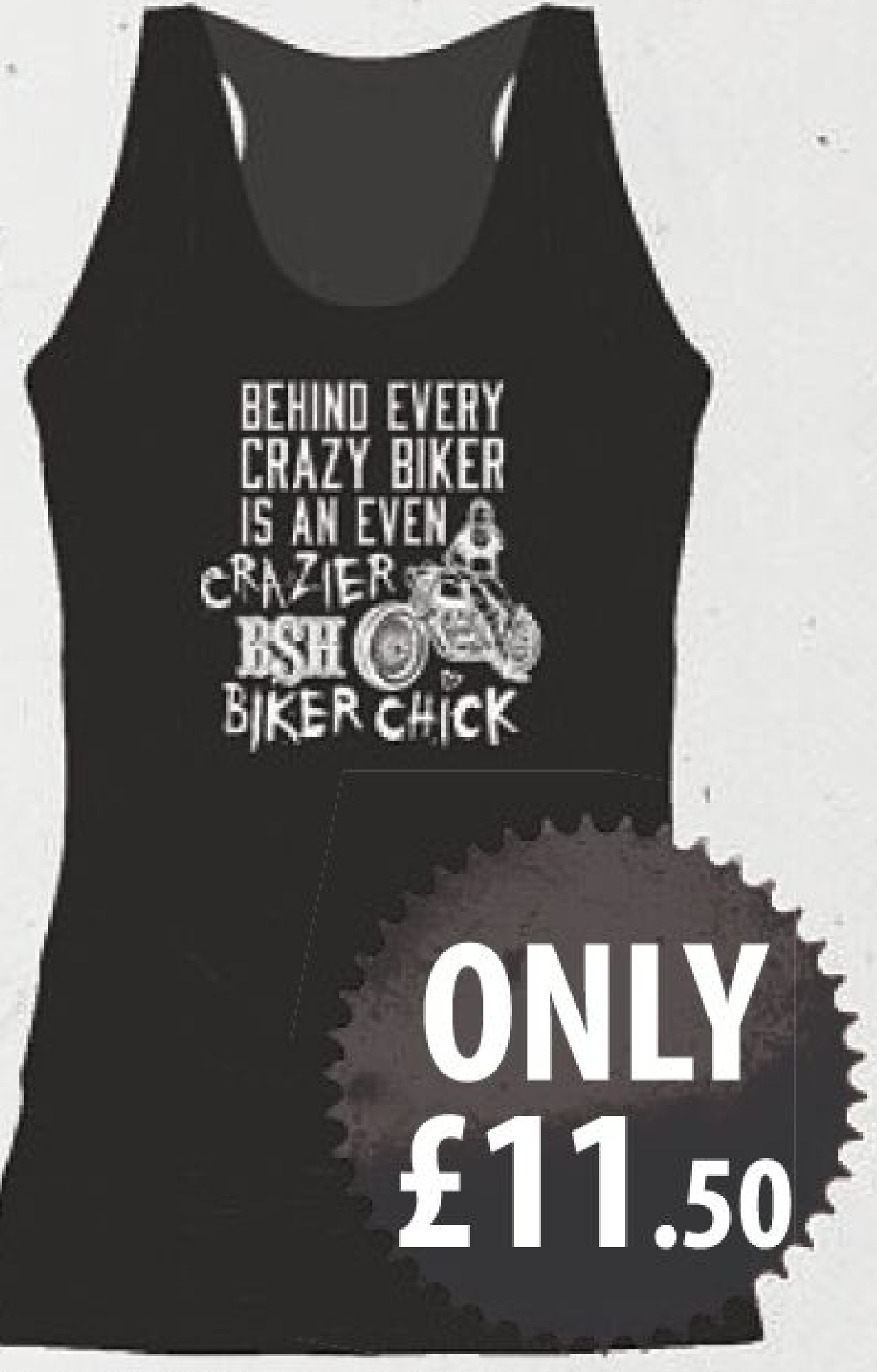

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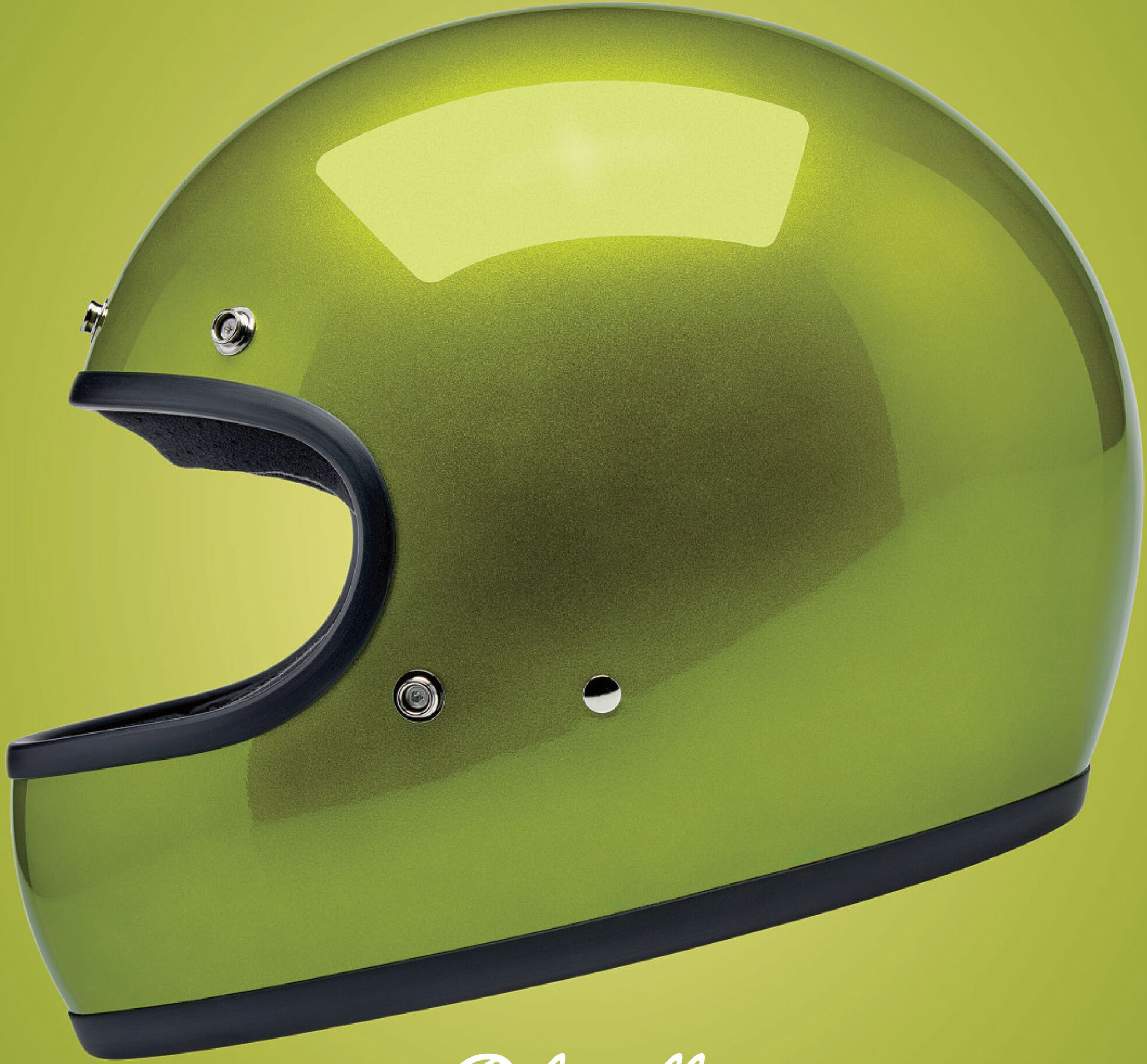

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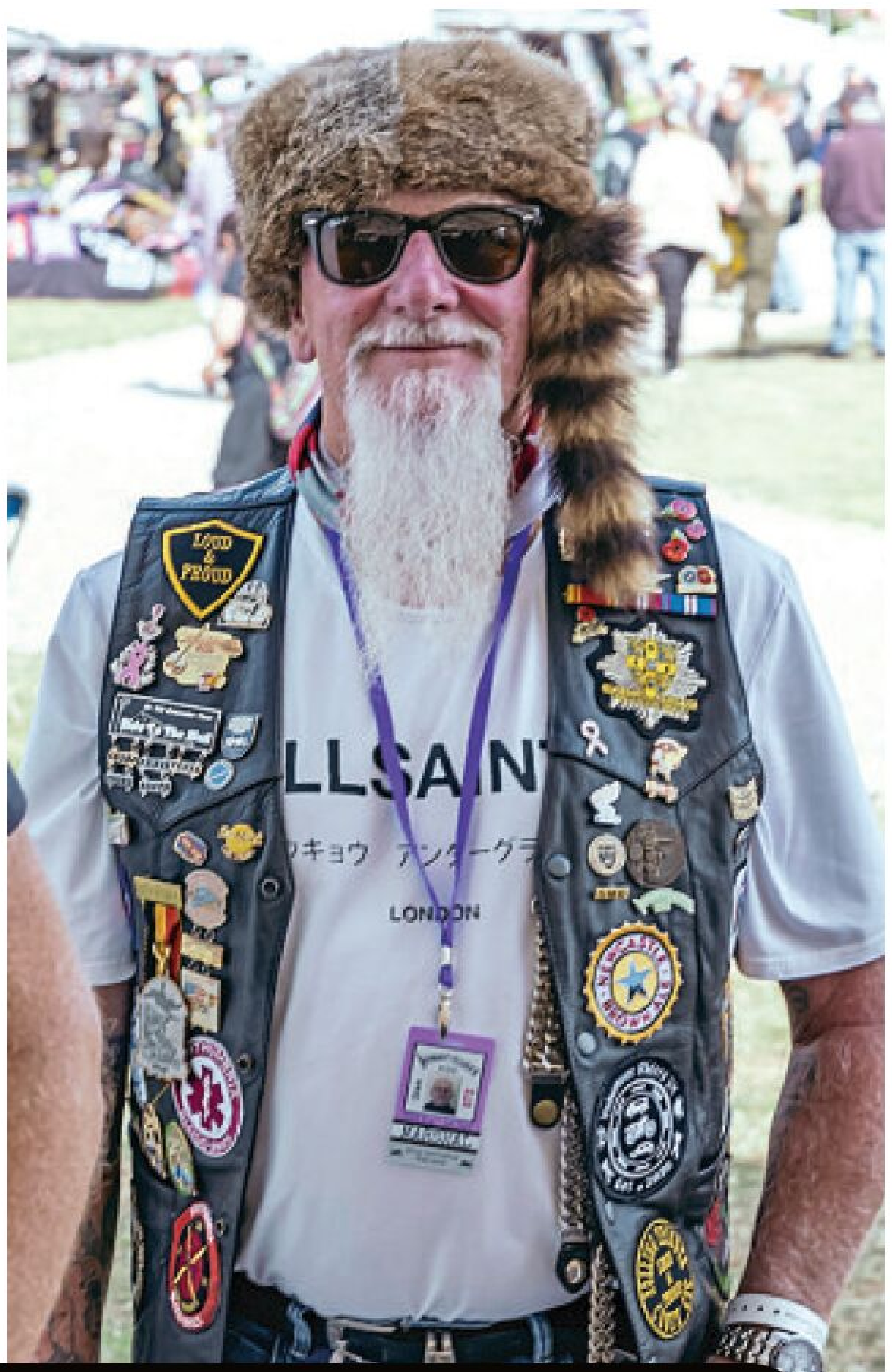
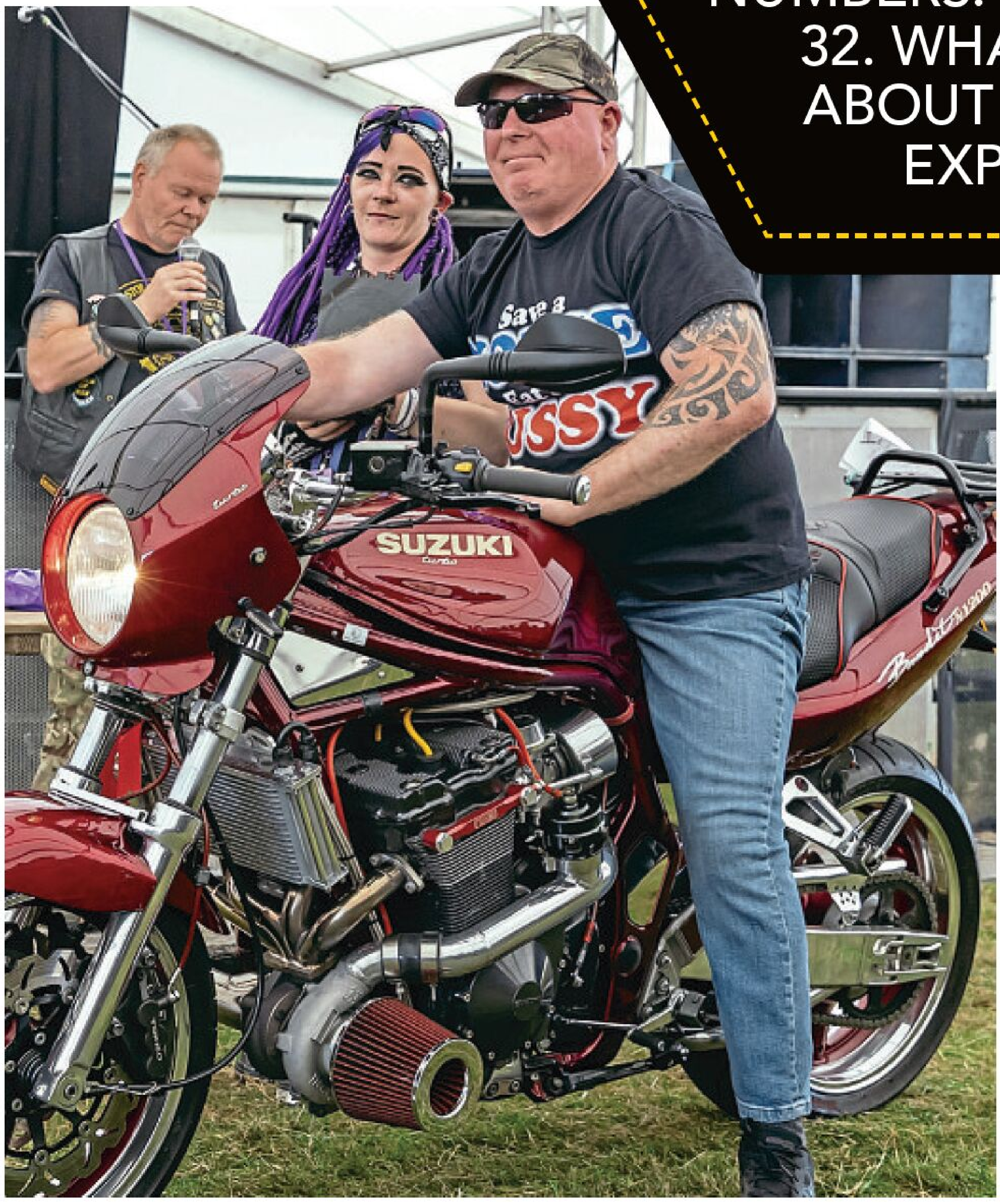


Event

STORMIN' THE CASTLE

FOR THE BEGINNING OF THIS ARTICLE, I'LL START BY SHOWING YOU THREE NUMBERS: 4256, 129 AND 32. WHAT'RE THEY ABOUT THEN? I'LL EXPLAIN…



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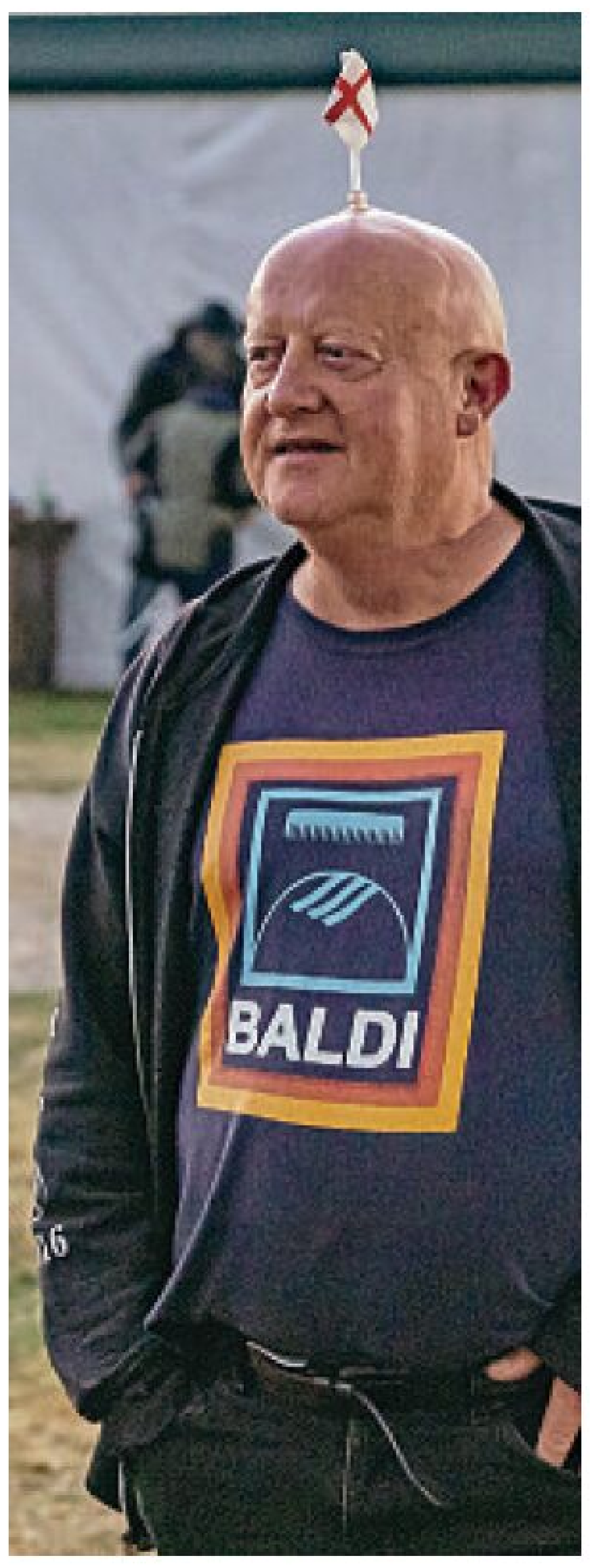
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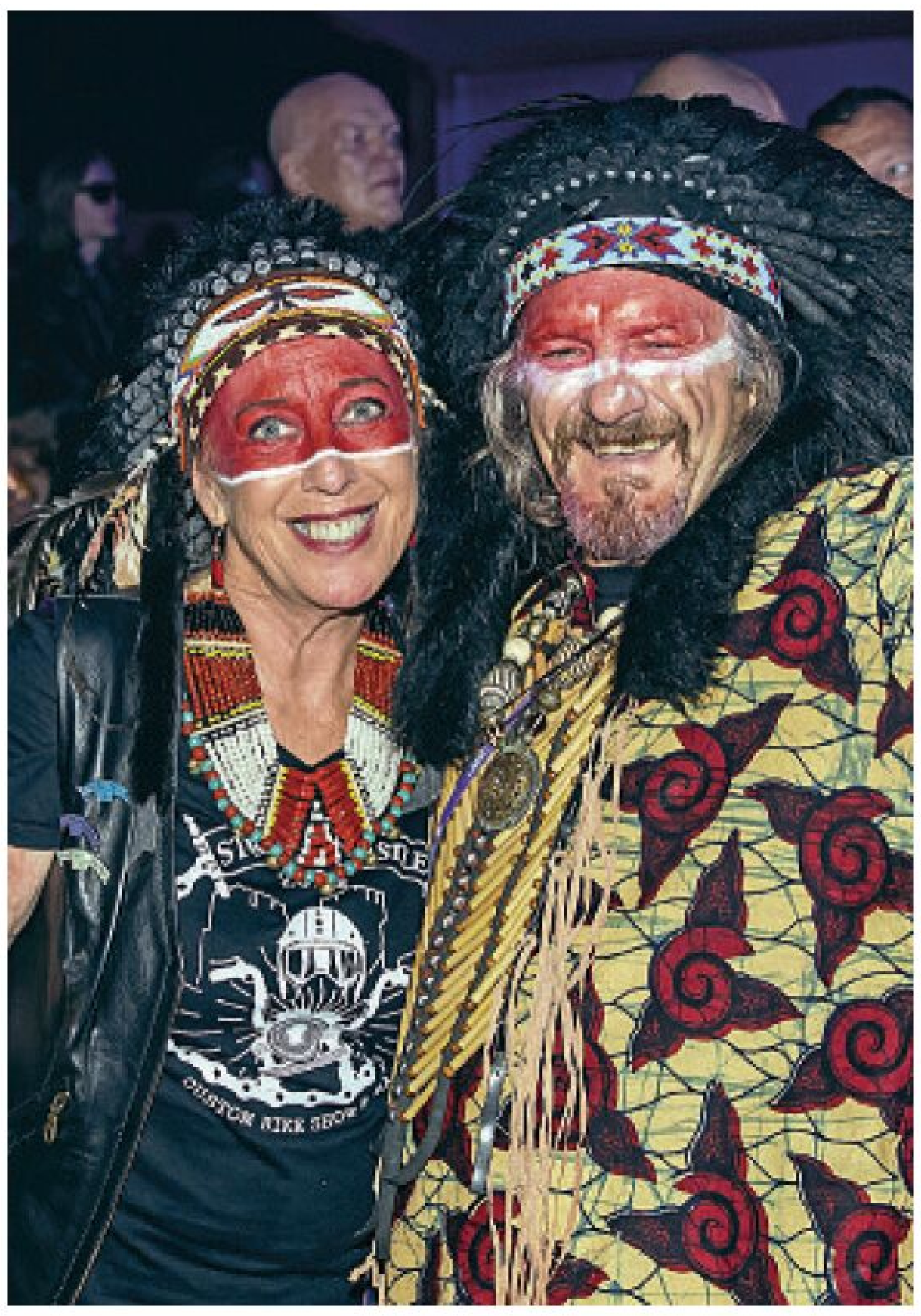
Frog on the Tyne



The first is the easy one: it's the number of people who attended the 2024 Stormin' the Castle – a number which, I'm told by the MAG committee, is on an even pegging with the Farmyard Party, which marks them both as the biggest events of the rally year.

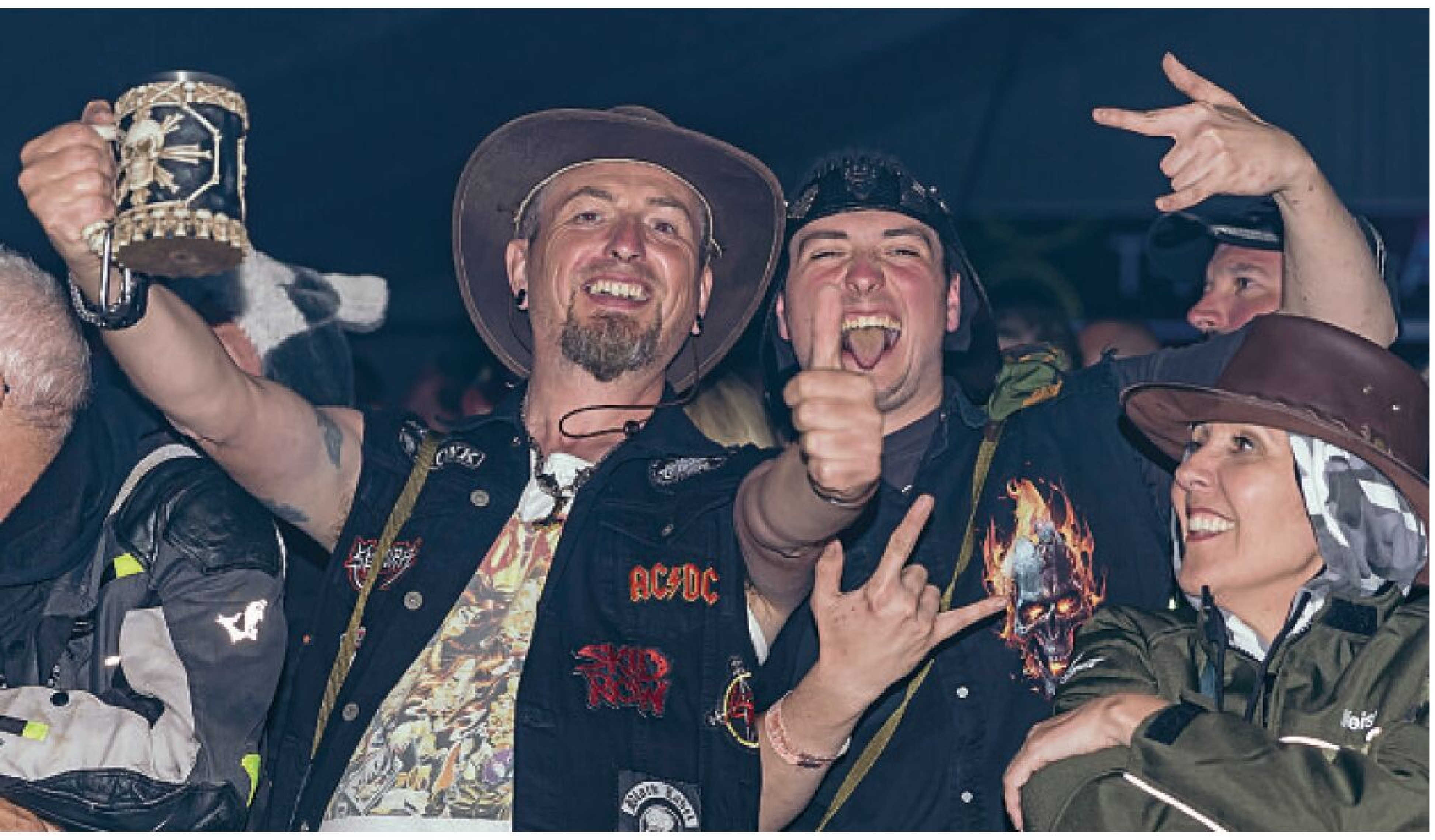
The second was a huge surprise to me, as was the amount of time it took to photograph each item that made it up. What is it? It's the number of bikes entered in the custom show. I've not seen such a varied and interesting selection at any event all season.

And the third? Well, that one's the best one yet, and I'll leave it 'til the end to explain that… I know, I know, mean, aren't I?

So, what happened at Storming last year? Well, there were three live music stages, a traders' market, a fun-fair, loads of food vendors, a stunt show, axe-throwing, and more. Musicwise, the Hobgoblin Stage hosted Frog on the Tyne on Friday, and Oil City Shakers on the Saturday; The Iris Stage had Kingsize Voodoo Traveller, and Swamp Tea on the Friday, with Big River, Bessie & The Zinc Buckets, and The Alex Hamilton Band on Saturday, with Big Red & The Grinners headlining. The Main Stage hosted Loz Campbell, The Breakfast Club, Lock n' Load, and The Fu Fighters on the Friday, and Fizzy Fish, and Southern Inc. on the Saturday, with the legendary Phil Campbell & The Bastard Sons headlining. Luckily, given that it was September and the rally was almost in Scotland, the rain held off all weekend (although the temperatures on Friday night, into Saturday, were down into single figures).

Saturday dawned bright and sunny, and temperatures soon climbed into the balmy 20s, setting the day for the custom show. Bikes started rolling in from midday, taking their place in the arena along the edge of a huge circle which, I'm guessing, had a diameter of at least 100 feet. They kept coming in, too, which meant a second inner circle'd been formed by mid-afternoon, and this in turn led to a third outside, the first being needed to accommodate the final bikes, ready for judging. As it was due to be judged late afternoon, with the prizes being presented at 5pm, that just left time for folk to watch the stunt display (by the Extreme Bike Battle Stunt Show) before the formalities began. Oh, and Bessie & The Zinc Buckets – a Stormin' Saturday afternoon tradition.

The awards went to: Glen's Honda Cub (Punters' Choice); Bobster's 1100 Katana (Best Jap); Mark Leigh's Panther M100 (Best Brit); Cookie's garden shed lockdown special (Best Alternative); Snarf from Holland's Goldwing outfit (Best Three-Wheeler); Shaun's Sportster



(Exhibitors' Choice); Keith Tennant's BSA M20 (Runner-Up Best Classic); Ron's Brough Superior outfit (Best Classic); Puss's BSA A10 (Runner-Up Best Paint); the V-Rod with paint by TJ Studio (Best Paint); Chris Stephen's turbo Bandit (Runner-Up Best Streetfighter); Fergie's Bandit-engined GSX-R (Best Streetfighter); Holty's Banshee trike (Runner-Up Best Engineering); Wilco's 1340 Harley (Best Engineering); Jim's 1200 Sportster (Runner-Up Best Custom); Davey's 133-inch S&S chopper (Best Custom); Tom's GSX1400 Katana (Runner-Up Best in Show); and Towza's VN2000 chop (Best in Show); How the judges managed to pick the winners I'll never know, as there were some truly stunning machines.

The finale of the prize presentation heralded the bands restarting – always a mixed bag for those first on as most people tend to head off for a bite to eat before the evening's festivities, floating between the two marquees to enjoy the bands of their choice.

That, really, just leaves me to tell you about the final number, 32, doesn't it? Well, it's a record number for the year (well, where I went anyway), and it relates to my customary counting of the number of bikes with L-plates at each rally and, I'm pleased to say, that Storming the Castle set a new record at 32 – 32 learners at a rally! I hear the words along the lines of 'biking's dying – we're becoming extinct' etc., etc., everywhere (and I've even been guilty of saying it myself), but Stormin' gives us hope for the future, doesn't it? Let's see if any biker event in 2025 beats that!

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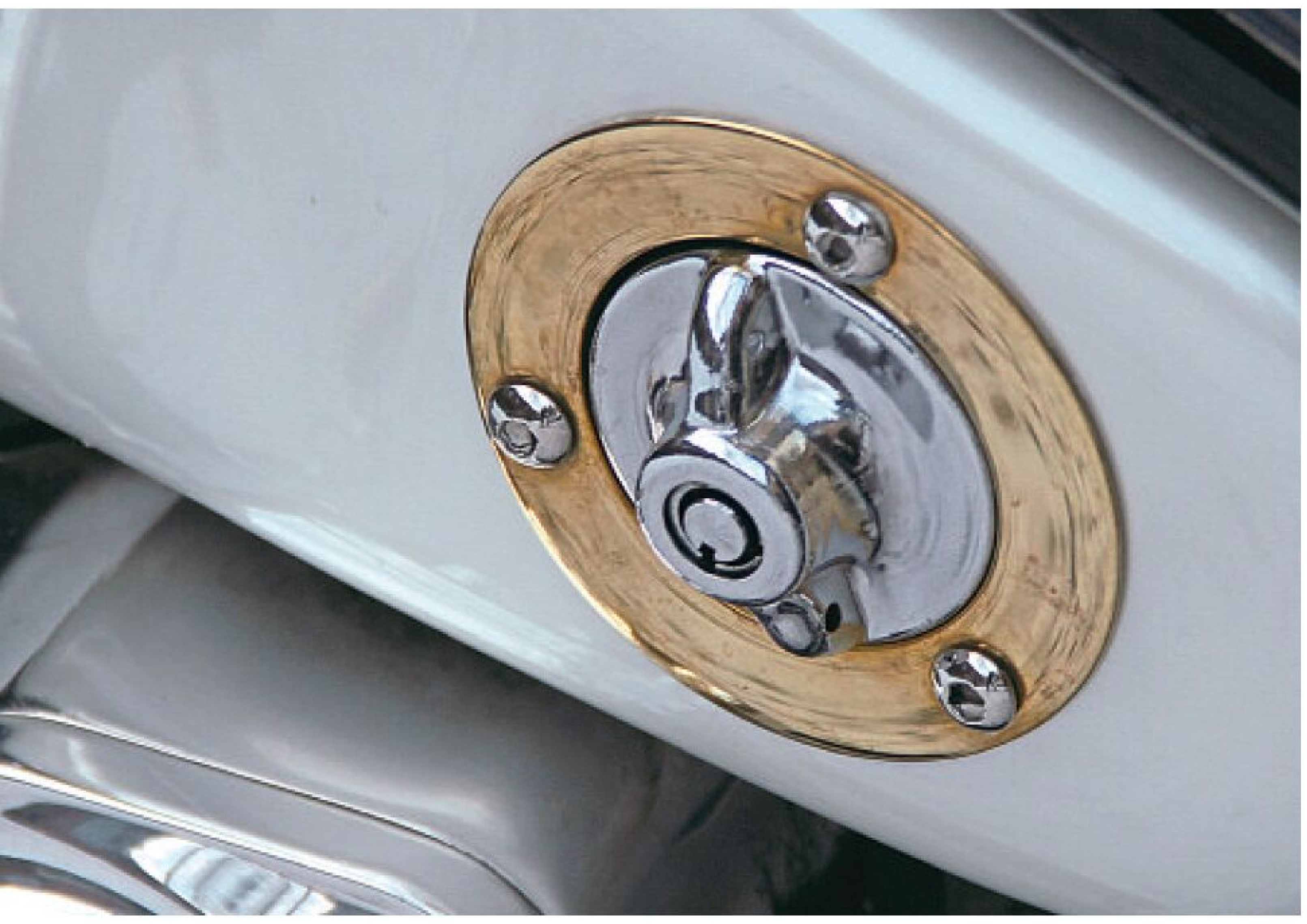
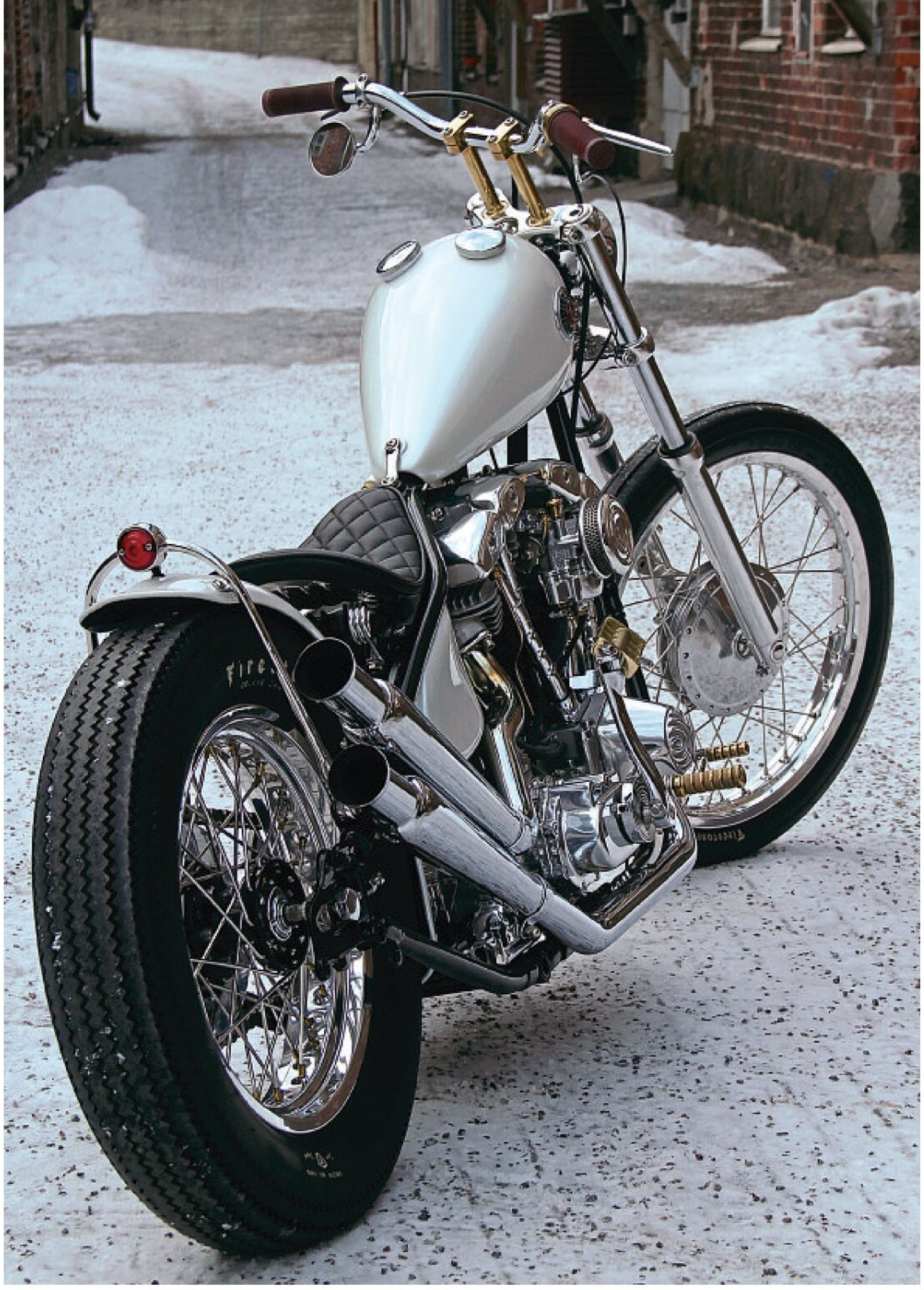
PART 2

Firestone
DELUXE CHAMPION

BACK IN ISSUE 487 IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR WE SHOWED YOU JUHA ROUHIKOSKI FROM FINLAND'S SWINGARM SHOVELHEAD HARLEY, BUILT BY SAMI RISKU – THE STUNNING WHITE SHOVEL ON THE COVER OF THE ISSUE. IN THAT PIECE I MENTIONED SAMI'D BUILT ANOTHER SHOVEL, TOO, AND PROMISED WE'D SHOW YOU THAT, TOO, AND, AS A MAN O' ME WORD, HERE IT IS.

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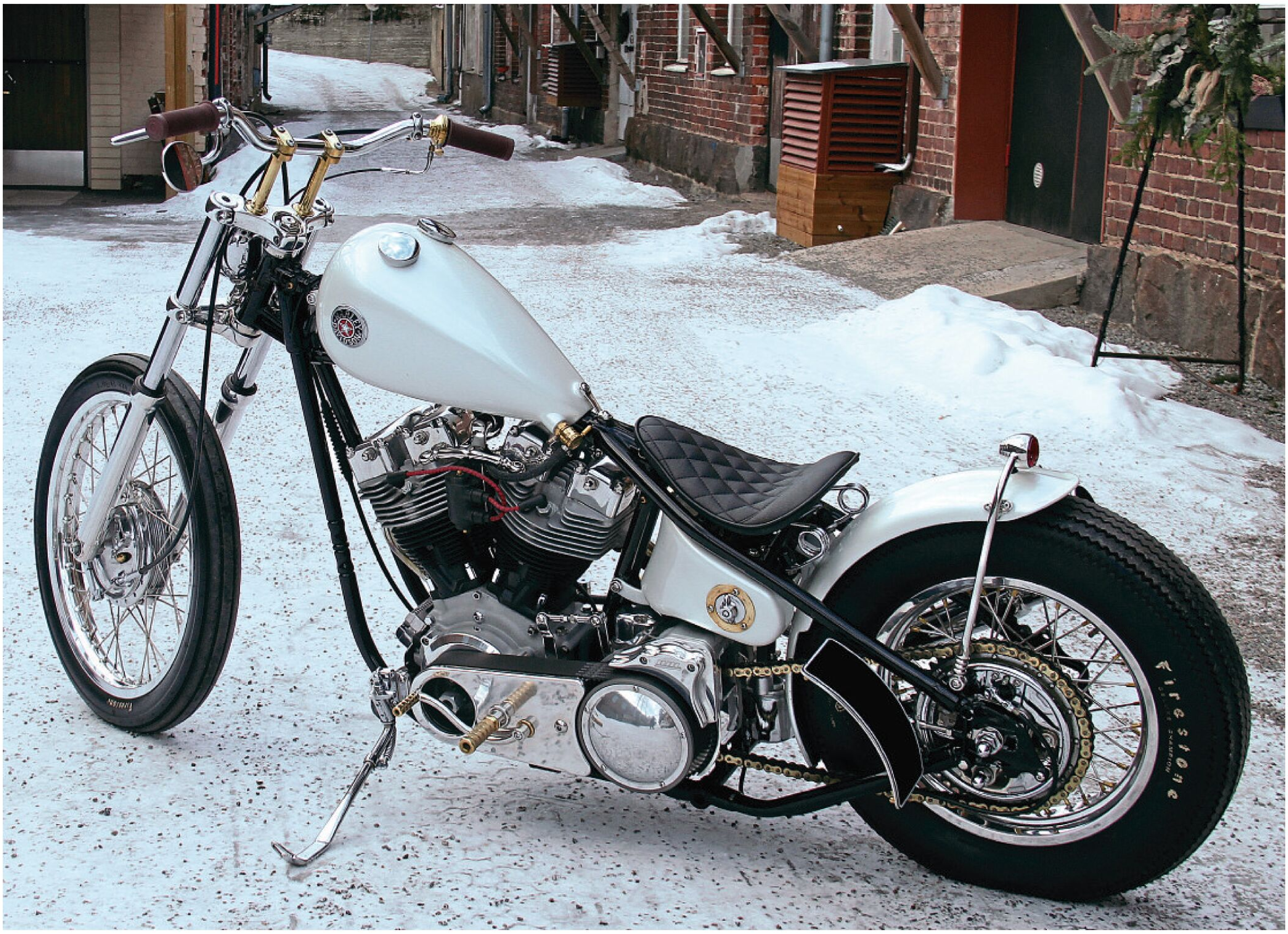
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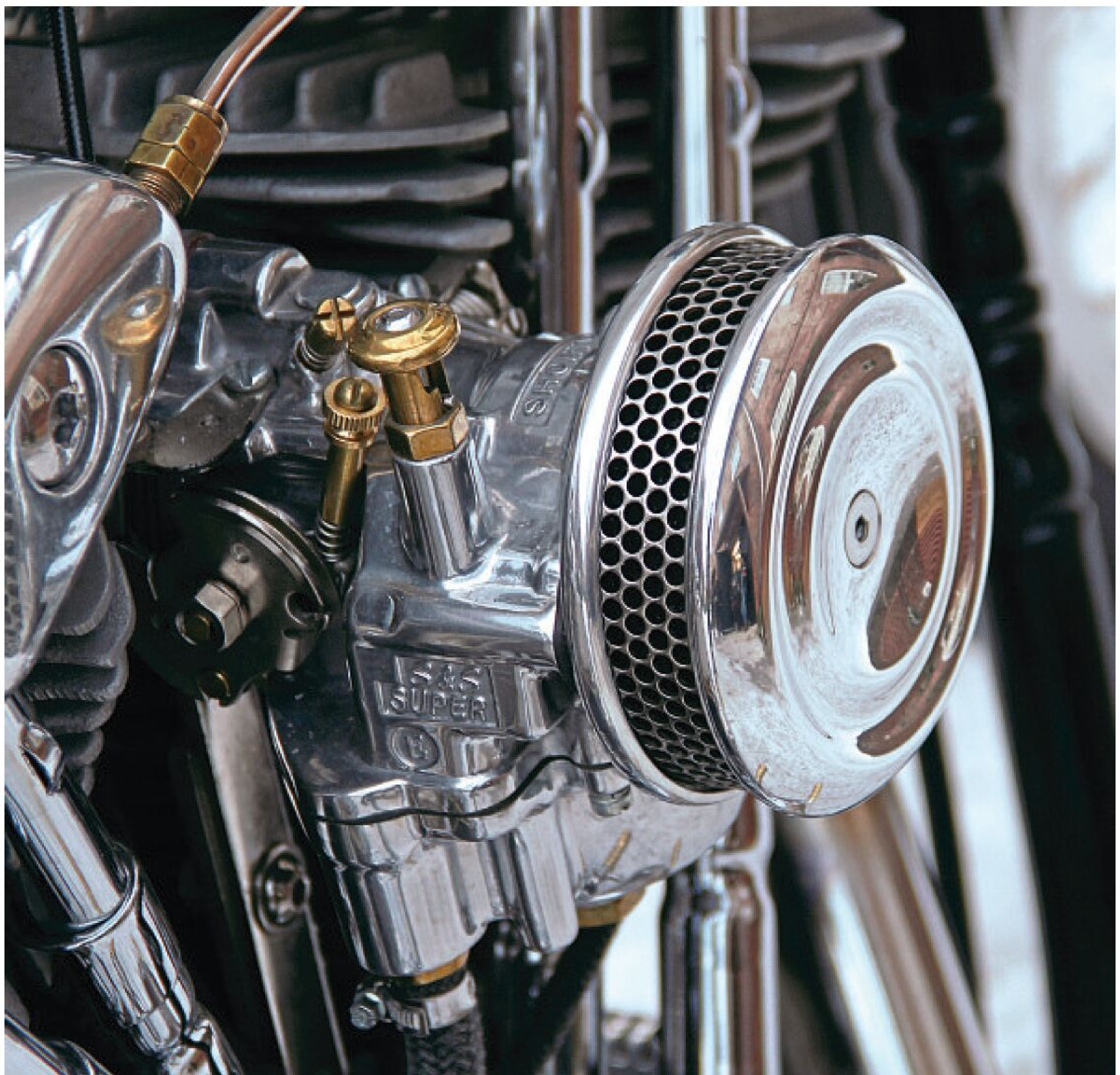

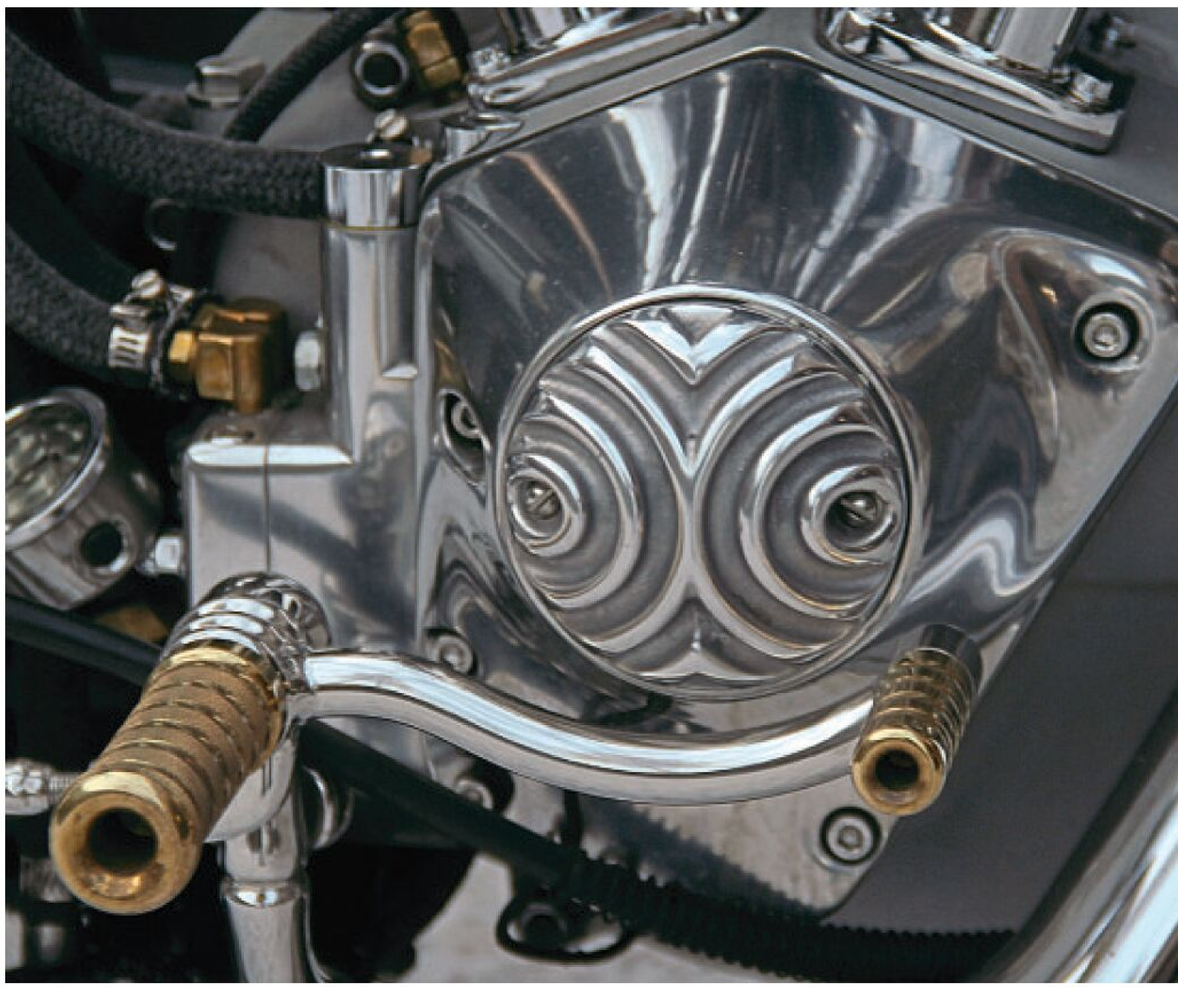

Like the pics of Juha's bike, these were taken last February on mine and Pam's trip to the far north (something I'm not entirely sure she's forgiven me for as she really wanted to go somewhere warm for a holiday, not to a country that was -7 degrees C at best while we were there, and -25 at worst). She took these pics for me, too, as I was over the other side of the river from Sami's workshop, photographing (another) Juha's Shovel (as featured in issue 485), as the days aren't very long that far north at that time of year.

This 'ere hardtail Shovel, of 1975 vintage, which makes a 1200 (74 cubic inch), was built by a guy named Jori Jantunen in 2019 and found its way to Sami in 2021. It'd had a full engine rebuild by Toni Haapakoski of Eastlands Engineering, who specialise in v-twins, using an Andrews A2 cam, an S&S Super E carb, an open BDL (which stands for Belt Drives Ltd if you were wondering) clutch and belt primary conversion, RevTech gears, and points ignition, and runs hard and strong. It sat in a hardtailed stock '75 frame, and runs drum brakes front and rear, 21- and 16-inch wheels respectively, highly polished 39mm forks and yokes, and an aftermarket tank, and was a very cool bike when Sami got it ("Thanks to Jori for the fine craftsmanship of the bike") but, as is usually the way, he wanted to put his own stamp on it, and that winter, when the temperatures dropped through the floor and snow covered the land, he set about doing just so.

As the bike'd been built so well in the first place and rode so nicely, no radical surgery was needed, so he limited himself to doing cosmetic changes and tweaks that'd personalise the bike to him. Being quite a dab hand at making exquisite little components that really embellish a bike, he made, amongst a host of other parts, his own neater, smaller, and much, much shinier air-cleaner for the S&S carb, sculpted a new set of kicked-up exhausts that suit the lines of the bike perfectly, a new points cover and split rocker covers with oil feed between them, made a new minimalist sprung seat, a new rear mudguard and its associated struts, and… and… well, due to limited understanding of each other's languages (especially on my part), it's a little difficult to work out which components Jori made and which Sami made as the quality of 'em is so high. I do know Mato from Ravens MC did the pearl white paint which stands out so strongly against the black frame, the brass and polished engine and parts and, of course, the snow, and that both Jori and Sami did a lot (a lot!) of the polishing, but most other details're a little sketchy, y'know?

Sami says the longest ride he's done on it was the trip with friends from Raven MC and Aliens MC to the Bildt Not Bought chopper fest in the Netherlands in 2023 (it's on again this year, 13-15 June, look in the events listings). It was, roughly, 1,500 miles each way, and, he says: "I had zero issues with the bike, and it turned out to be a great travel bike!" On top of that, as they were all waiting for the boat across the Baltic at the ferry port in Helsinki, he met a guy named Bjorn Henning Larsen who was looking for bikes for the Oslo Motor Show in Norway in October that year – "He liked my bike, and invited me to bring the Shovel to the show. It was a great trip, and the bike won the Custom class."

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SPEC:

1975 H-D Shovelhead 1200 (74 cube) engine (spilt rocker covers, homemade oil feeds, Andrews A2 cam, S&S Super E carb, homemade air-cleaner, BDL clutch/open primary conversion, RevTech gears, points ignition, homemade points cover, homemade exhausts, brass kicker pedal)/frame (modified), homemade mid-mount 'pegs/levers, Firestone tyres (front/rear), RST wheels (21-inch front, 16-inch rear), H-D drum brakes, 39mm H-D forks/yokes, homemade risers, TC Bros handlebars, aftermarket controls, homemade switches, aftermarket petrol tank, homemade seat, homemade rear mudguard & struts, modified H-D oil tank/battery box, homemade side-mount, homemade minimal loom, Marchal headlight, unknown aftermarket rear light

FINNISH (SORRY):

White Pearl paint by Mato from Raven MC, chroming/polishing by Jori Jantunen & owner

ENGINEERING:

Bike built by Jori Jantunen, refurbed/upgraded by owner, engine rebuilt by Toni Haapakoski at Eastlands Engineering

THANKS TO:

"Jori Jantunen for his fine craftsmanship; Toni Haapakoski at Eastlands Engineering; Mato; & anyone who helped…"

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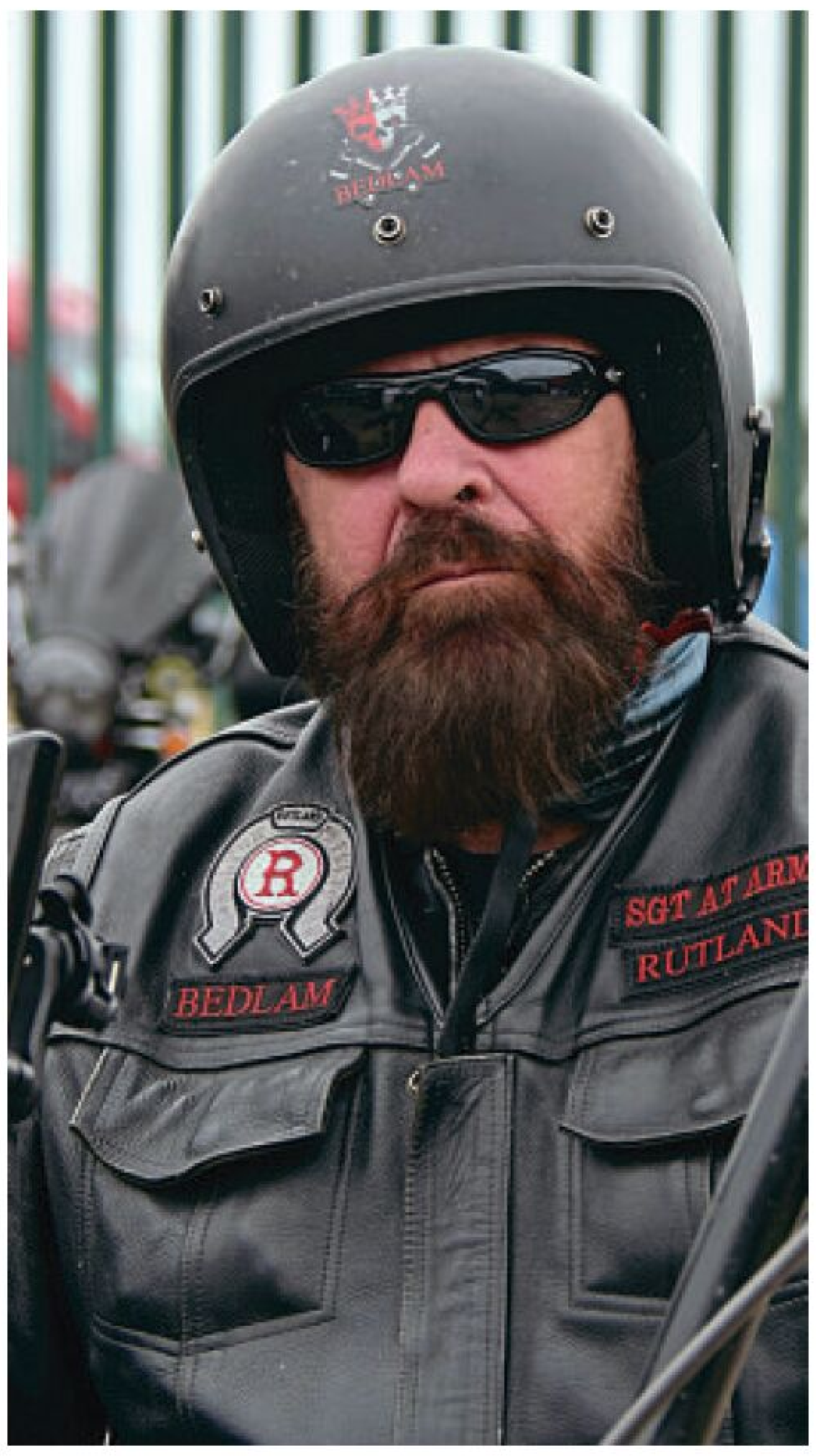
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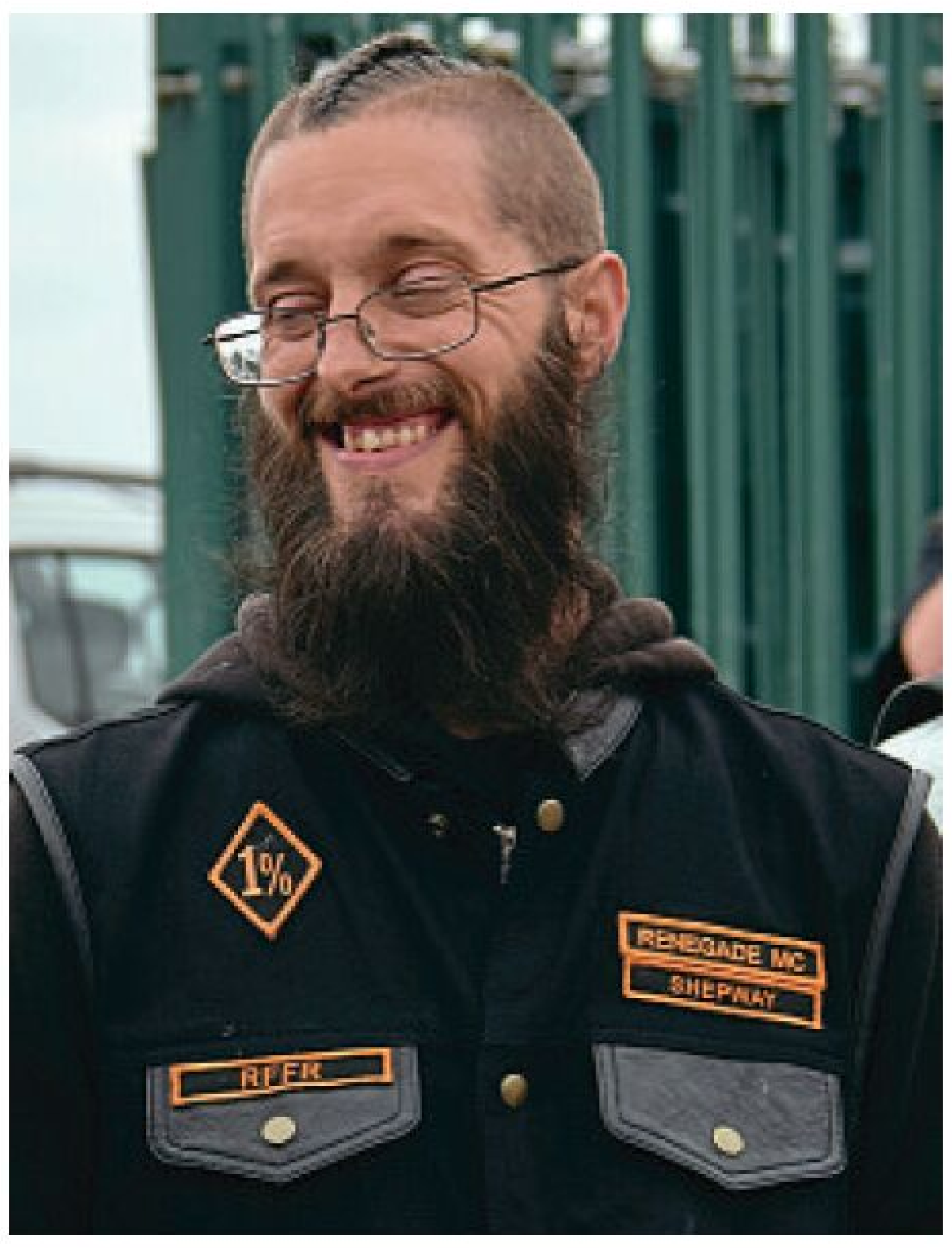

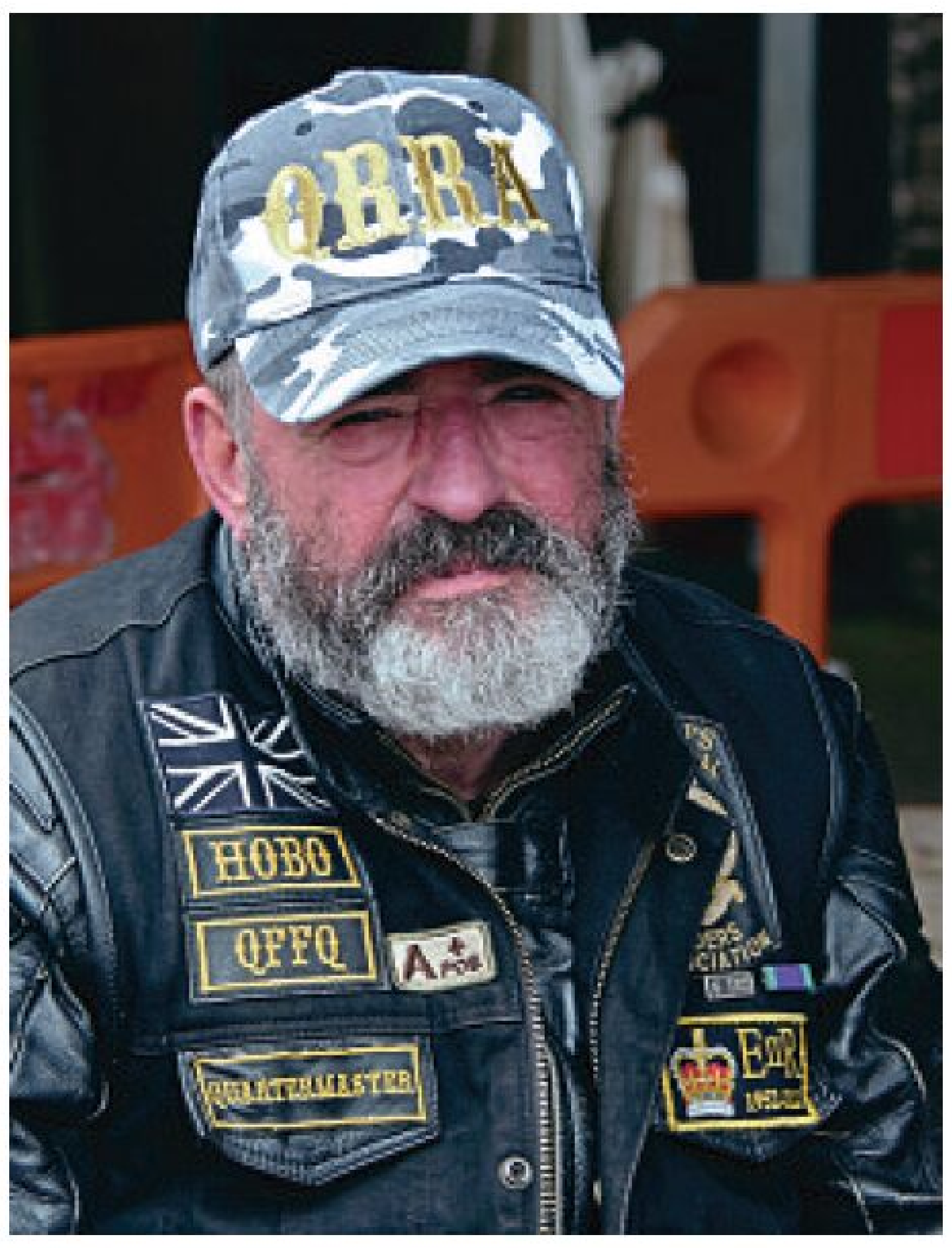

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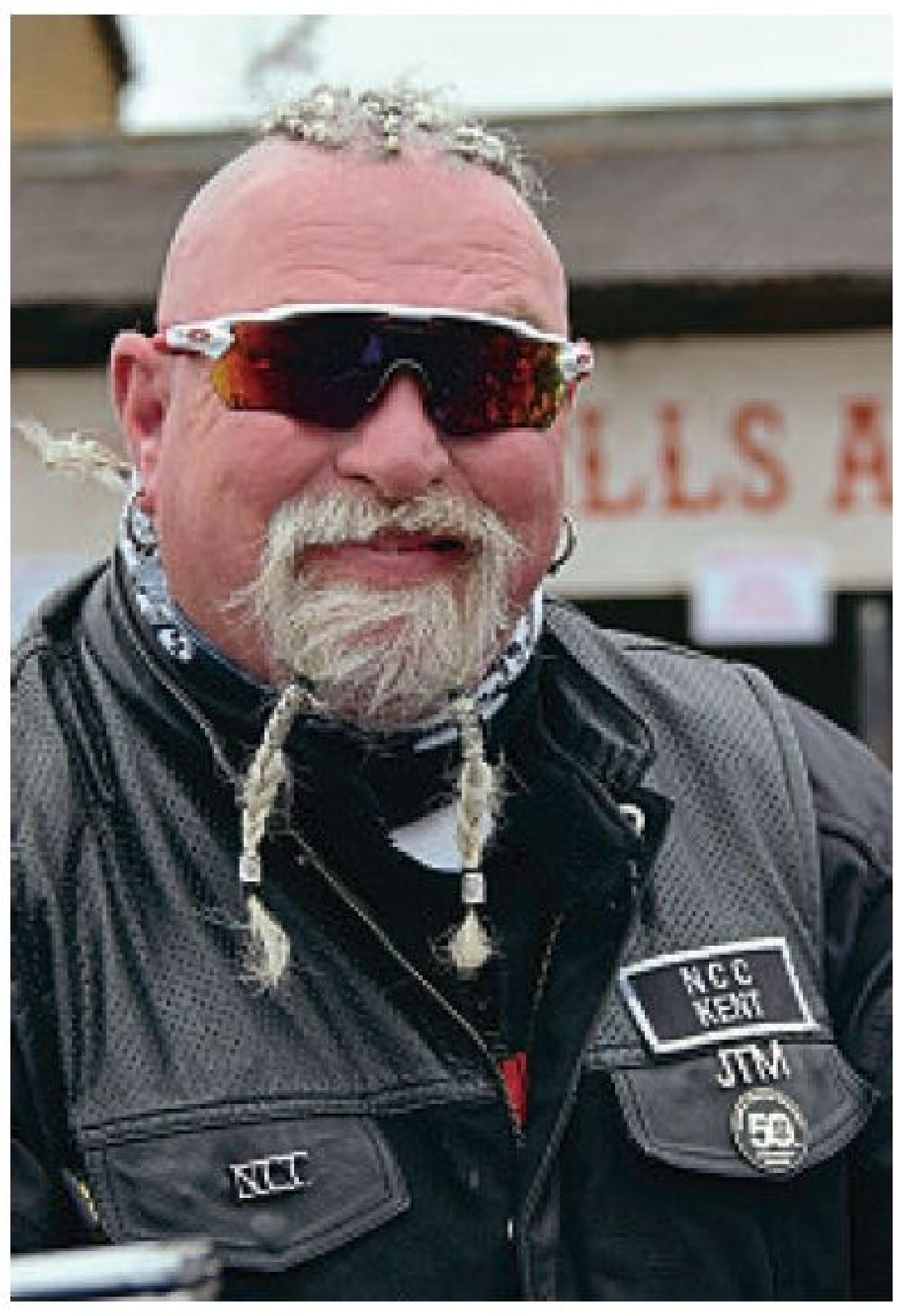
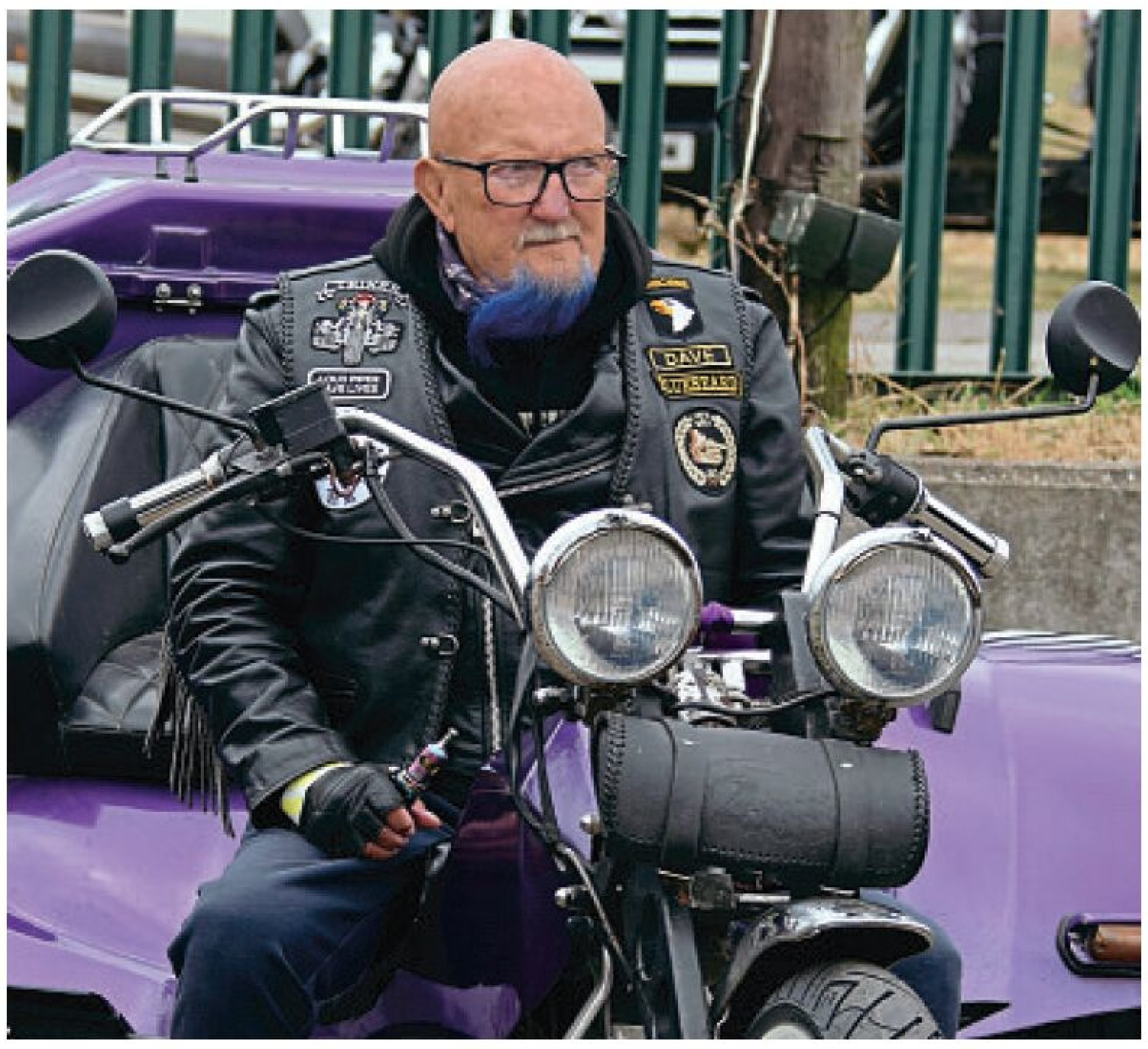
1ST BATTALION





Just before writing this, I happened to be reading an old article Jim Fogg'd written about the Kent Show back in the day, and it reminded me how much things've changed, and how much I miss all the interactions that've been 'progressed' out of our daily lives. He mentioned the banter with the bloke when paying at the Dartford crossing kiosk (remember that?), and it made me think of other interactions that've been taken away by progress; no more banter with the petrol pump guy and, rarely, unless you're out with your mates, do you see another biker at the petrol station? Back in the day I lived in Sussex, and didn't go to Kent very often because it was local and wasn't much of a ride – it was more about the journey than the destination back then, and now I wish I'd not been so picky and been more often. Times've changed and I'm reminded all too often these days of the phrase 'use it or lose it', so grab any and every opportunity for banter with fellow bikers while we still can.

There's no denying that event successes're weather dependent, and the high winds predicted for this weekend precluded the safety of bouncy castles this time around (and, unlike in Jim's day, the Queen Elizabeth Bridge was a bit blowy, too), but kids, being kids, still managed to entertain themselves playing ball and chasing each other around the grass. Gemma Rollins was on site again, enchanting the children with her fabulous face painting and, emphasising the family inclusive aspect of this Yard Party, there was also Uncle Mac's Magic to entertain in the afternoon, firstly doing sleight of hand tricks on the adults out in the yard, before putting on a magic show for the children that was heavy on audience participation and enjoyed by all.

The bike show winners here're still chosen by public vote and, amusingly, the XS650 that won Best Custom in round six of the BSH Custom Champs in 2023 won the Best Rat category here! Thankfully, owner Greg Brockwell saw the funny side, and's still very happy with his two-year labour of love, and the cash prize, no matter what the category. Best Paint went to Terry Price's 2006 Triumph Rocket III, painted in a stunning Game of Thrones theme four years ago by Gary Cooper in Sutton Coldfield; Best Trike was won by Alan Frost who migrated to his Ford Pinto-engine trike about six years ago. Both Best Bike and Best in Show prizes were taken by the NCC's Graig Coles for his ground-up build of a '76 Shovelhead engine and Attitude Cycles frame – the build took just short of a year with help from his dad, John; copper-coloured powder-coating by Bigfoot Customs & Blasting, and paintwork by Hanger 10 Airbrushing in Kent. The lovely combination of metal finishes, with minimum use of black to accent the gold on the paintwork, make this a very striking bike.

The next Family Yard Party at Angel Farm'll be a two-nighter again, and moving well away from the Bank Holiday weekend to 5-7 September.

LAUREN

RACE

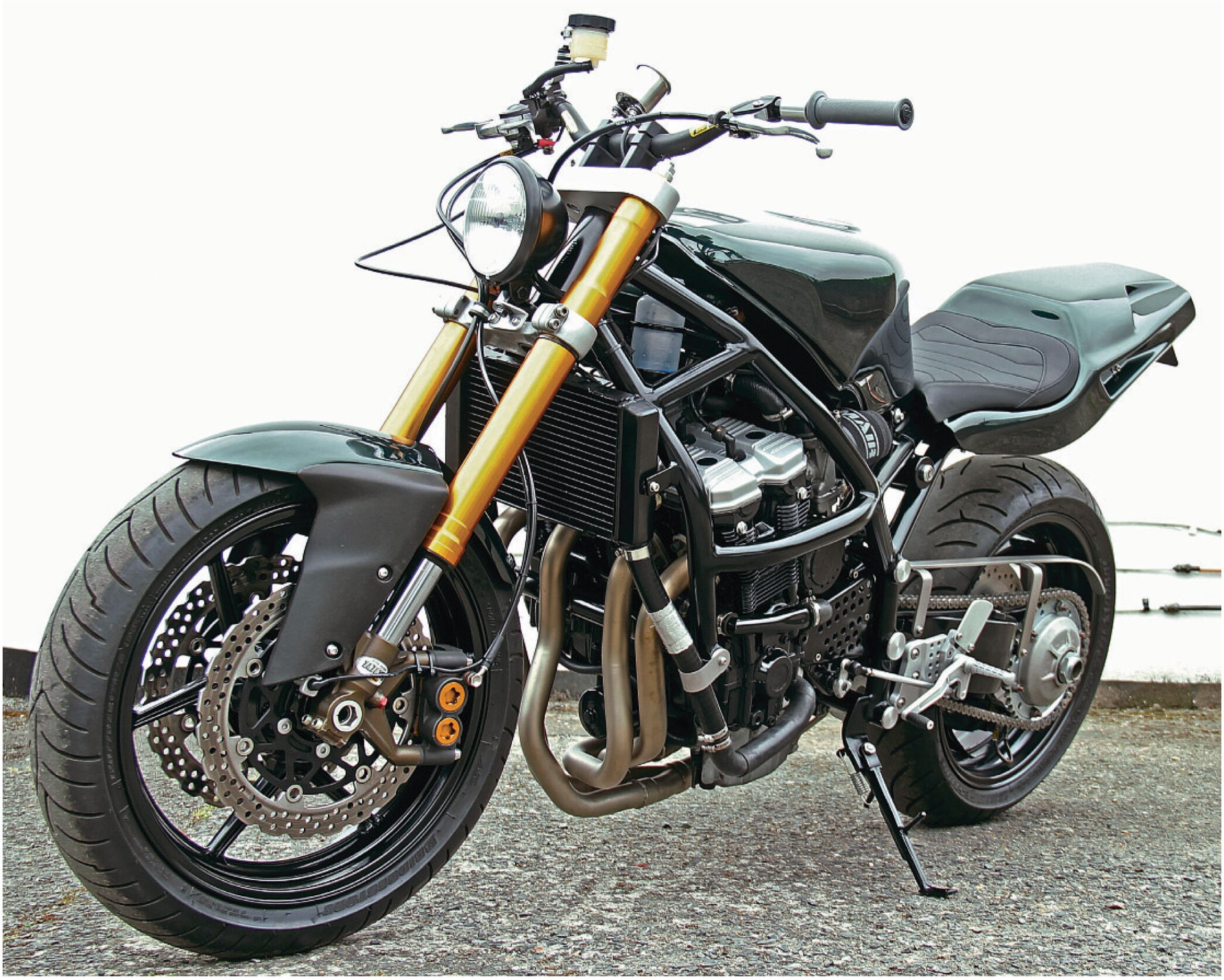
PART TWO

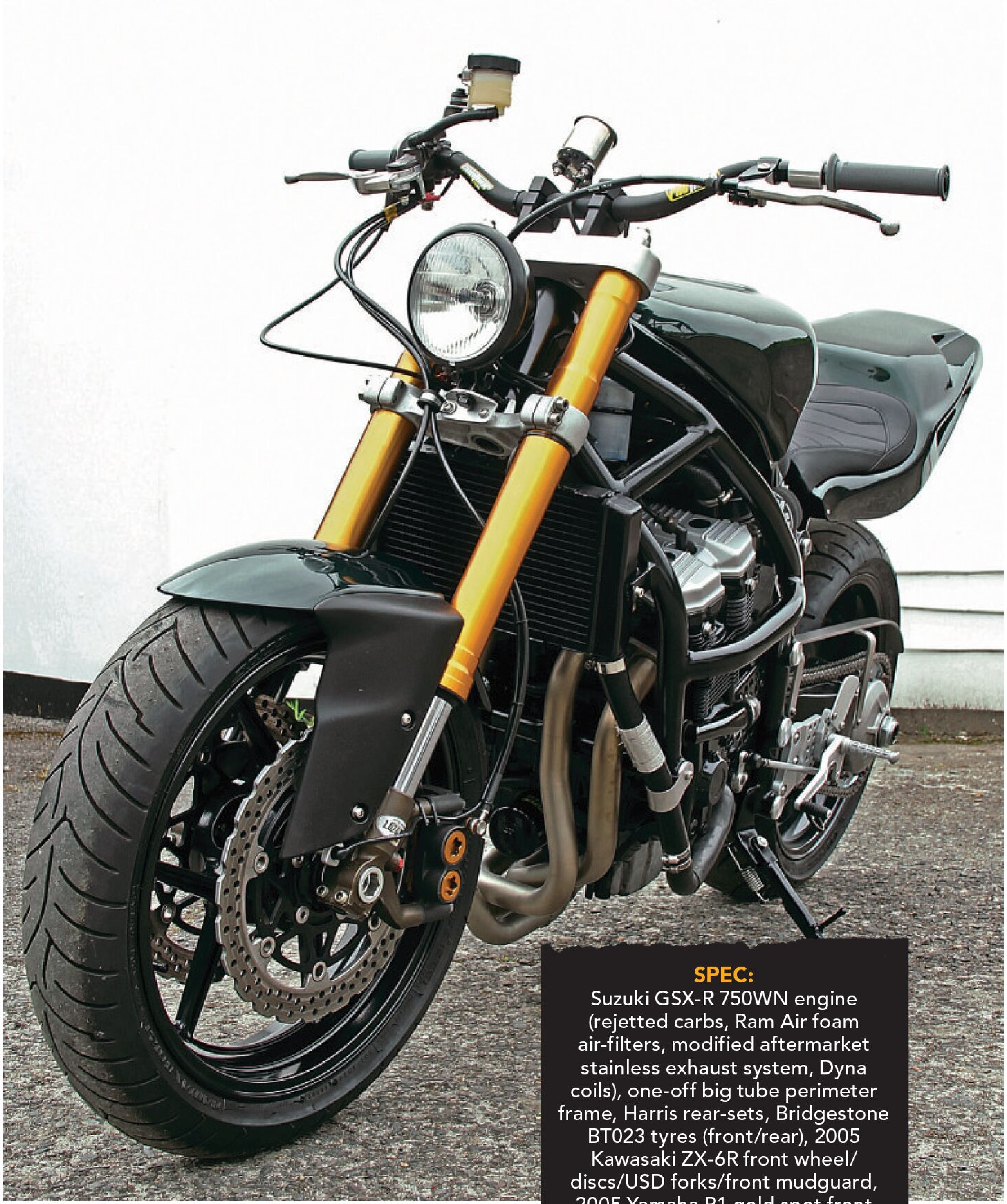
BATTLAX BT023
180/55ZR17M/C

BRED

LAST ISSUE WE SHOWED YOU JAMES' HIGH-TECH BANDIT CHOP ('RACE BRED'), AND TOLD HOW EVERYTHING HE BUILDS HAS A PERFORMANCE-INSPIRED EDGE TO IT – THIS TIME, WE'RE GOING TO DEMONSTRATE THAT FURTHER; THIS, LADIES N' GENTS, IS HIS GSX-R 750 STREETFIGHTER.

contour





SPEC:
Suzuki GSX-R 750WN engine (rejetted carbs, Ram Air foam air-filters, modified aftermarket stainless exhaust system, Dyna coils), one-off big tube perimeter frame, Harris rear-sets, Bridgestone BT023 tyres (front/rear), 2005 Kawasaki ZX-6R front wheel/ discs/USD forks/front mudguard, 2005 Yamaha R1 gold spot front calipers, Kawasaki ZXR400 yokes (modified), one-off billet top yoke, HEL Performance brake lines, one-off risers, Pro Taper Contour 'bars, Honda CBR600RR front brake master-cylinder, custom billet mini-switches, Koso speedo, Renthal grips, Honda CBR400RR tank (modified), Ducati 916 tail-piece, one-off seat (covered by Surrey Trimming), one-off under-seat battery/electrics boxes, Honda VFR800 single-sided swingarm/ shock/wheel/brake/torque arm, Suzuki GSX-R 750 rear brake master-cylinder, minimal loom (by Roy 'The Doctor'), single Bates-style headlight, LED strip tail-light

FINISH:
Prep' by owner, Ferrari Verde Zeltneg paint & lacquer by Tim, powder-coating by Chris Brown Marine, Scotchbriting by owner

ENGINEERING:
Frame by Wellsy, bike built & all machining/fabrication by owner

THANKS TO:
"Wellsy; Pete; Tim; Roy; all the boys at work; & Louise & my girls Hayley & Kara…"

A good few years back, he was running a very tough FJ1200 chop, but'd gone as far with it, really, as he could, and was looking for a new challenge. Someone offered him a good price for the big Yam and, unsurprisingly, it became theirs, and he set about looking for a new project.

He was offered, shortly after, the rolling chassis that would, eventually, become what you see here. It'd originally been built by NCC Devon Honorary Wellsy for another Devon member, Geoff, and'd been jigged and tacked up a couple o' times before the style you see was decided upon. Sadly, Geoff passed away before it was done, and it sat in Wellsy's workshop as a jacked-up rolling chassis for 14 years (yes, you did read that right – 14 years!) before James bought it in 2012. "How could I pass up such an awesome frame?" he says, and he's right.

Once back at his, he swiftly stripped it down, and had the frame blasted to check it over (14 years in bare metal is a long time). Happy with the fact that it was reet, as northern folk'd say, he finished off the welding, and a process of dry-build fabrication began. As I mentioned last issue, he works in a very automotive-based place, and is allowed to use their machines, etc., at lunchtimes, evenings and weekends so it came together fairly quickly. Once he was happy with it, it went off to his good friend Sladey's place for paint prep and top-coat and, once back and reassembled, he says, he couldn't have been happier with it - "It was rapid, handled well, and looked tough – a proper streetfighter!"

As is so often the way in bike-building, not long after he had to sell it to fund the purchase of a family car. He was gutted, but slightly mollified by the fact that it went to a good home with Pete from NCC Surrey, who loved it so much he kept it for 10 years. They (he and James) stayed in touch and, in November '22, Pete messaged him to ask if he'd like to buy it back. "I jumped at the chance!" he says.

Once back in the south-west from the Home Counties, James felt he needed to put his own stamp on it again and so, as you can imagine, an extensive tear-down began. The frame was checked and rechecked, and he made new bungs and various brackets and bobs to tidy it up, and uprated the front end, mainly for better braking, with the addition of a sharp end ensemble from a 2005 ZX-6R Kawasaki (front wheel, USD forks/wavy discs, front mudguard), held in ZXR400 yokes (well, the bottom one's ZXR – the top's a billet one he made), and with stupendously powerful gold-spot calipers from a 2005 R1. The rear end, a single-sider from a VFR800 'Onda, got the once-over, as did the CBR400RR tank (modified, naturally), and the period Ducati 916 tail-piece, and they were all pronounced sound, but the engine he decided to swap for a fresh, and lower mileage, 'un, still a water-cooled GSX-R 750WN, as being an NCC bike for 10 years means they rack up the miles, they really do. It wears a set of Ram Air foam filters (recommended by most engine/tuning gurus) on rejetted carbs, and a full stainless 4-1 system that he adapted to fit the peculiarities of the one-off frame. Lastly, he fitted a set of Dyna coils which, in the days of the late, lamented Streetfighters magazine, would've been described as producing a spark so strong it'd set fire to a bucket of p*ss but, as we here at BSH are much more genteel, doncha know, I'll simply say are quite good.

That done, the front muddie, tank n' tail-piece went off to his good mate, Tim, to be drowned in a number of coats of Ferrari Verde Zeltneg (green, basically – as I said last issue, James likes the colour green), while the wheels n' swingarm were powder-coated black, and James did a whole load of Scotchbriting on the parts that, on any other 'fighter, would probably be polished alloy. The guy who wired his Bandit chop, Roy 'The Doctor' (see the last issue for the reason he's so named), worked his electrical magic over it and that, he says, was that – "The bike was done, and I was very (understatement) pleased with it, and won't be letting it go again!"

Except that, actually, he is – letting it go, I mean. Y'see, since he's finished the Bandit chop you saw last month (the satin black n' greeny one with the upside-downies, not the shiny black one wi' the funky fairing), he's decided he'd rather keep that, and that means that, reluctantly, he's going to have to offer the trick-frame Gixer to anyone who can come up with the readies – four thousand, nine hundred and ninety-five of your finest English pounds (or as close to that as possible). Bell him on **07510 135531** if you're interested.

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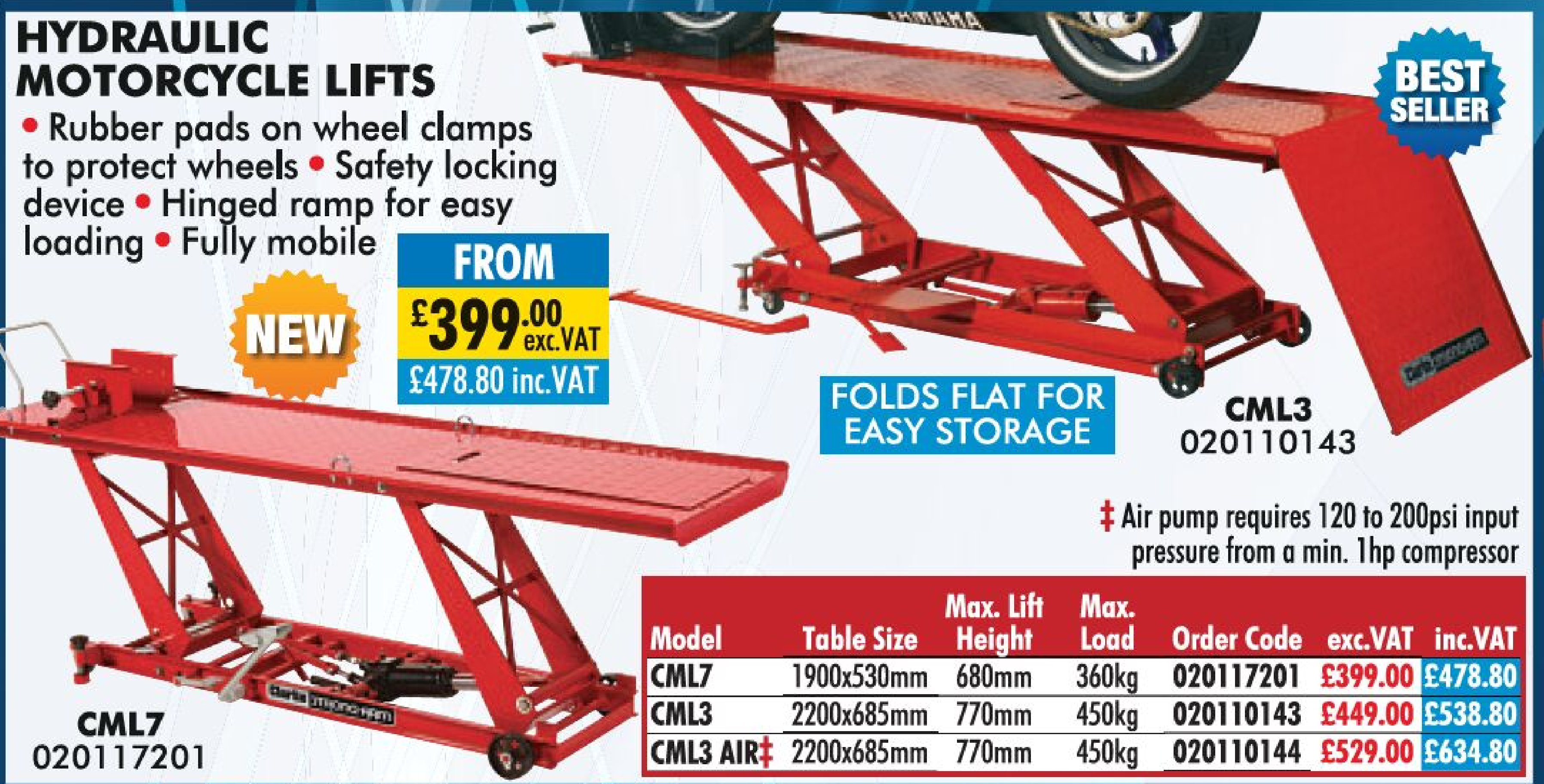

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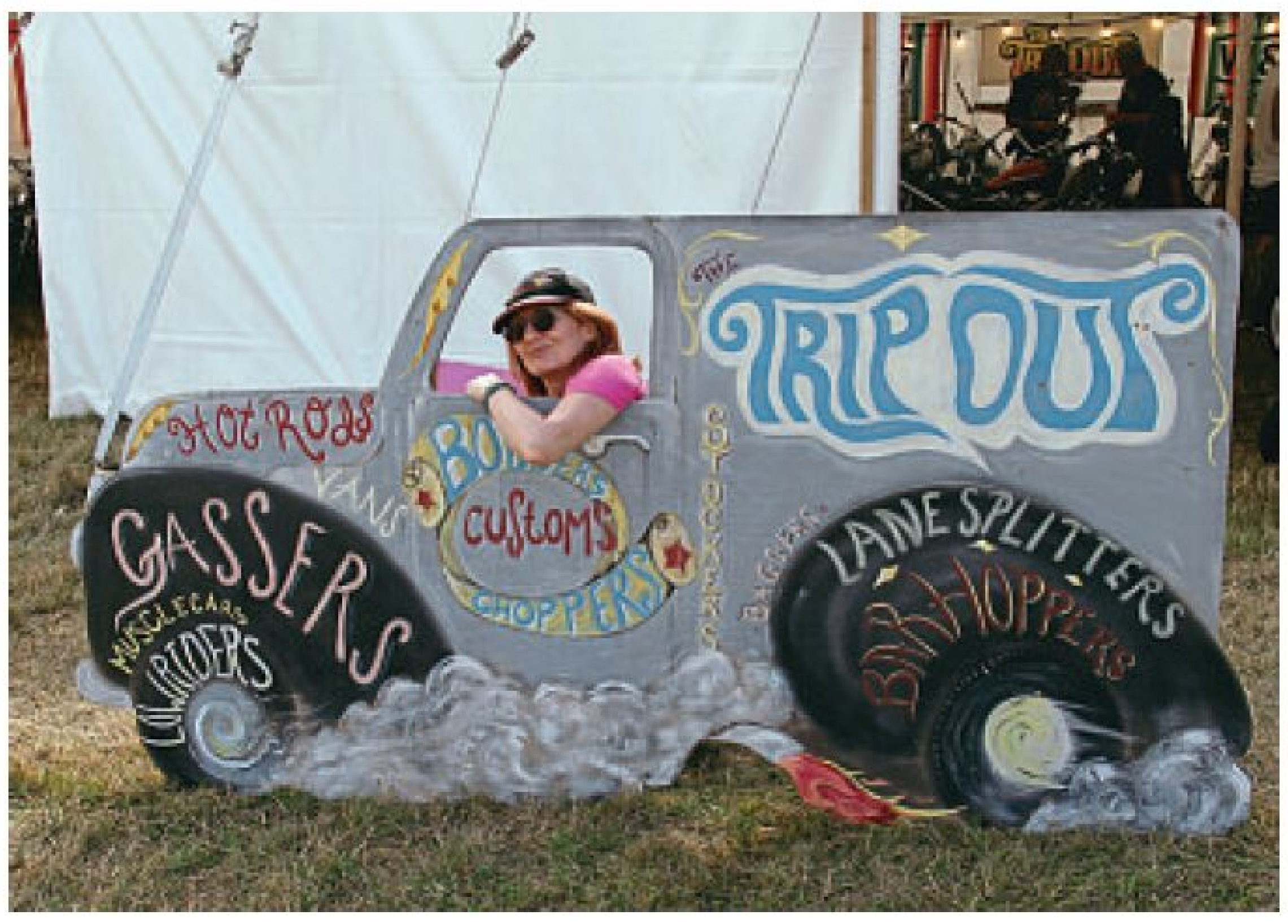
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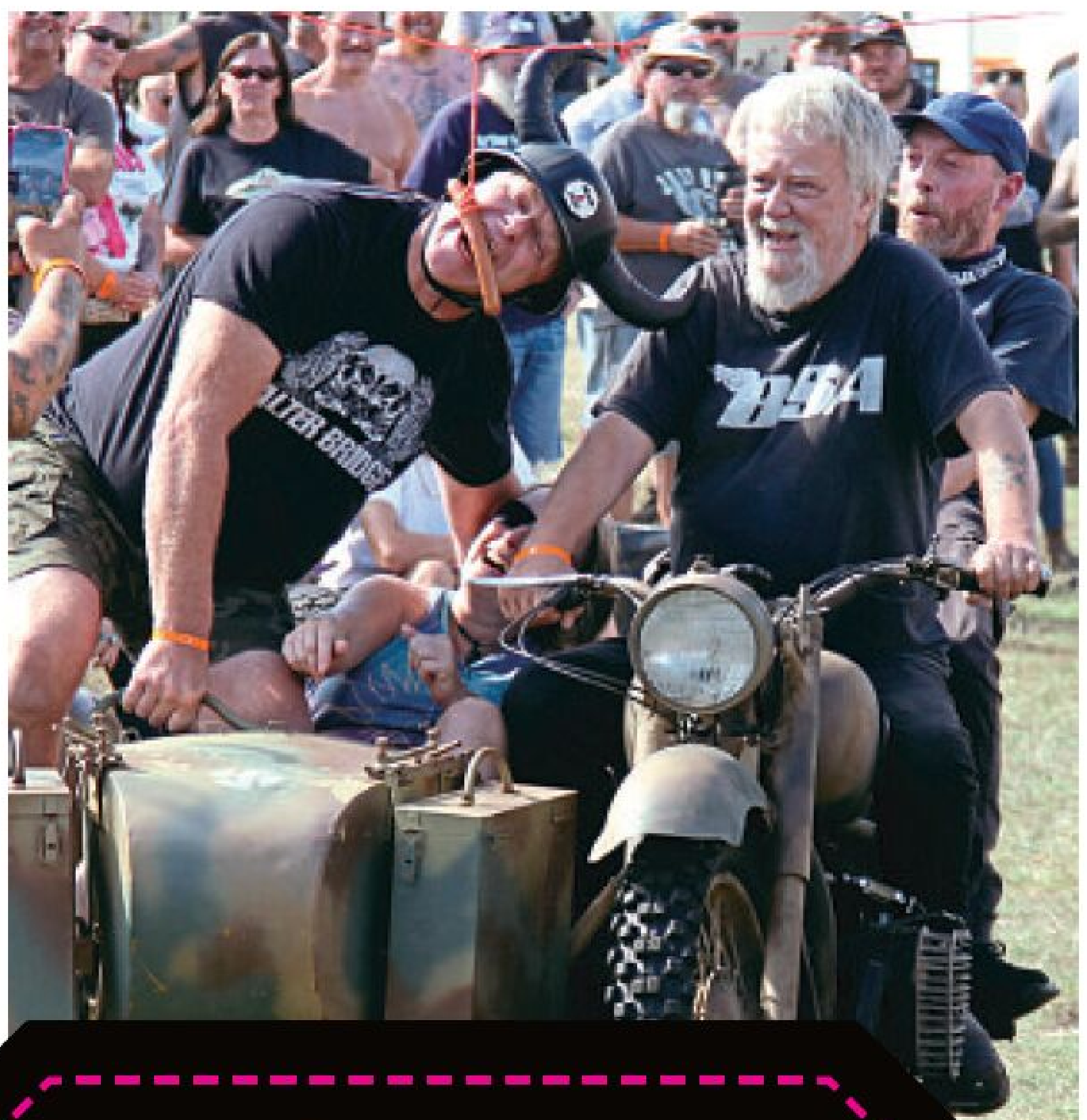
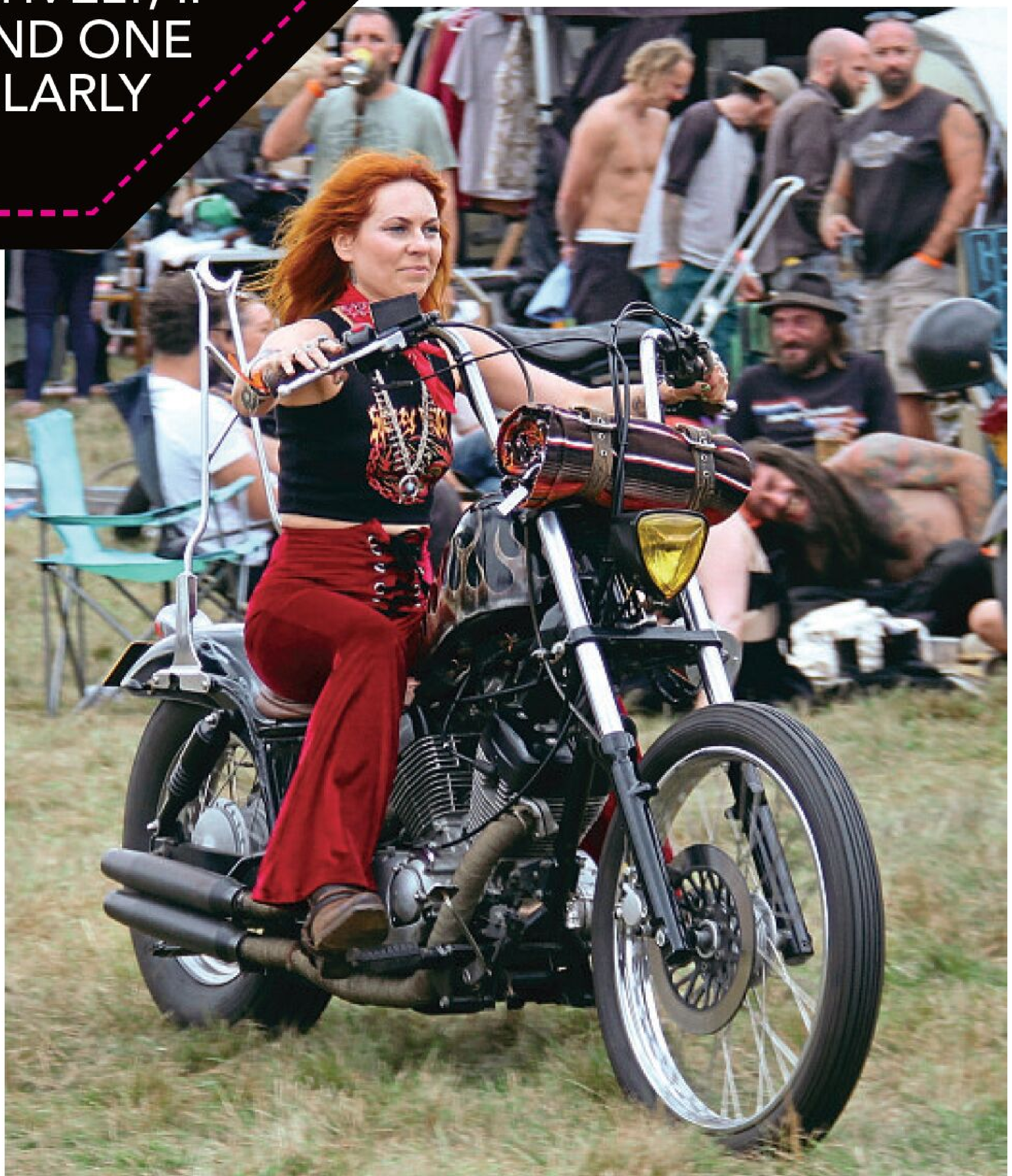
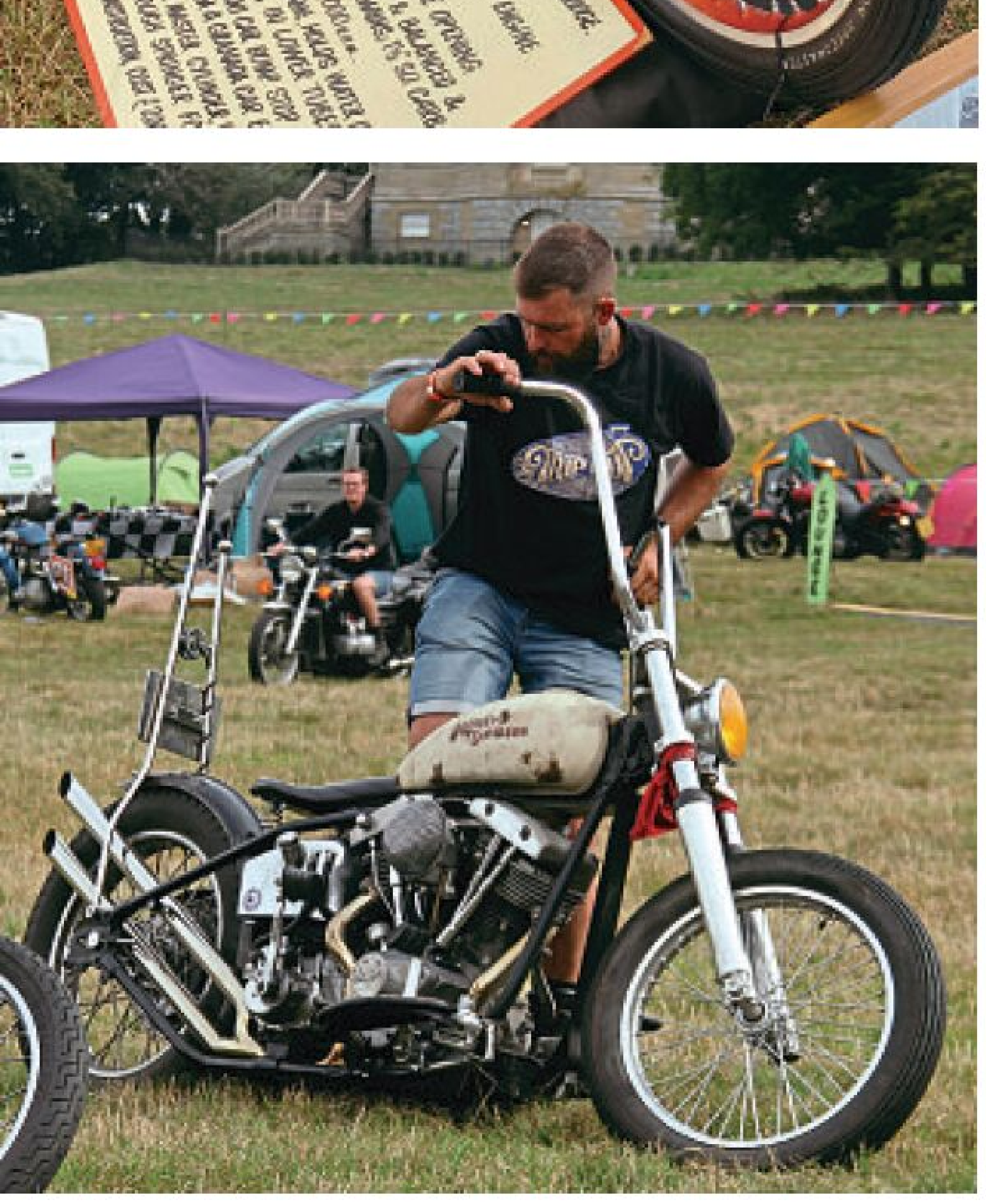


Event

THE TRIP OUT

AFTER A LONG SUMMER OF TRAIPSING THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE COUNTRY GOING TO EVENTS, IT'S NICE TO DO ONE THAT'S RIGHT ON ME DOORSTEP (FIGURATIVELY, IF NOT LITERALLY), AND ONE WHICH I PARTICULARLY ENJOY.





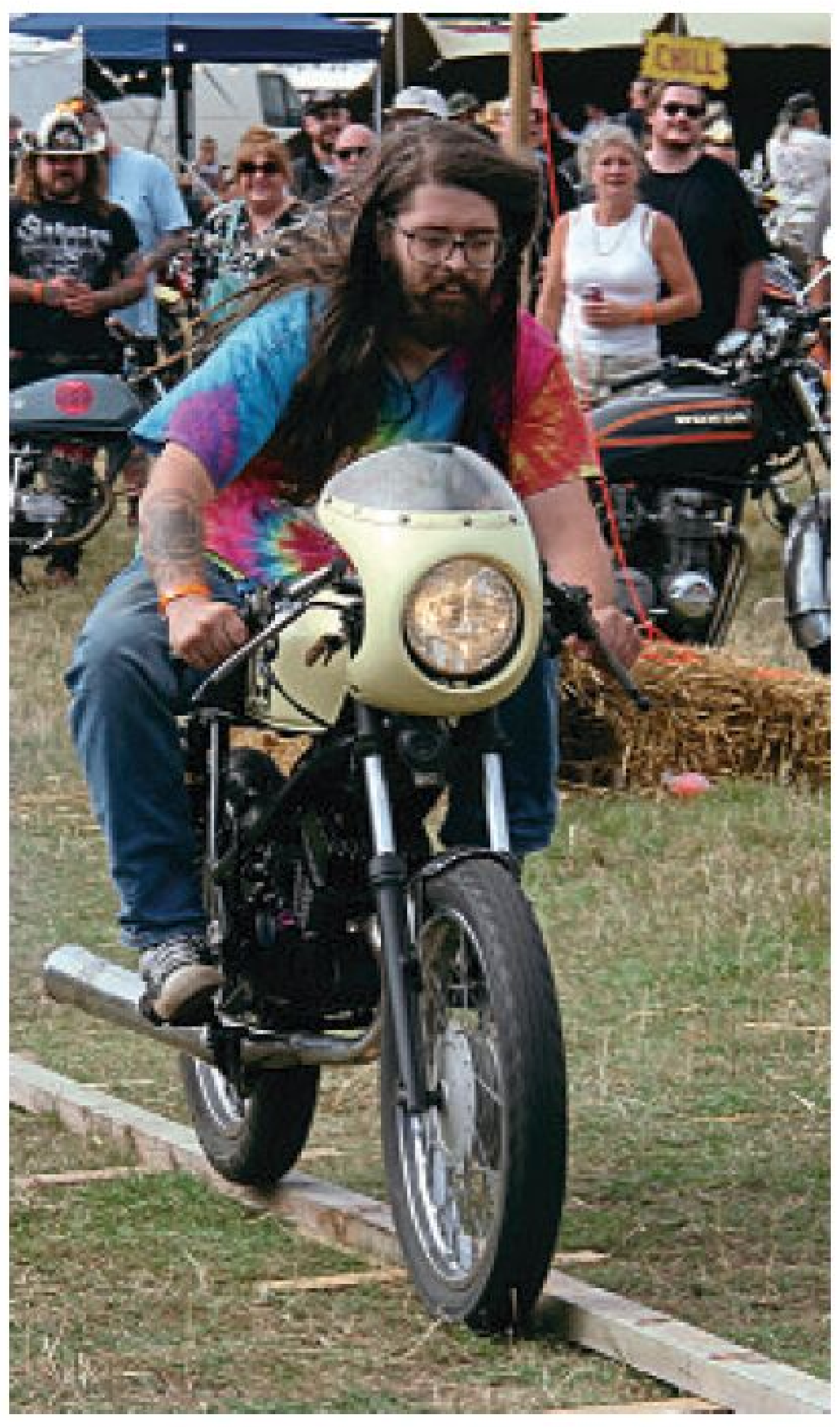
The Trip Out, you see, since it moved to the Euston Estate (that's Euston, West Suffolk – not Euston-where-the-trains-are), is maybe eleven miles away from the BSH Editorial Hovel – so close in fact that I've been known to drive over on the Friday morning in the van to drop all the gear off, and then come home again to get the bike and ride back across (and then do the reverse on Sunday, obviously). It's a nice run on the bike, too; across Thetford Forest with the sunlight dappling through the trees, skirt round the west of Thetford itself to avoid the town centre, and then a few miles along long, straight roads between fields of newly-harvested corn down to Euston itself – easy and largely free of trucks, Barries in hatchbacks with loud exhausts and, well, most traffic actually.

Then, on to the Estate, stop at the gate to check in, and then a long and dusty, slightly downhill, track to the site itself. The 'pipes from Harleys and Brits blow the dust up as they rumble along it, and you soon get used to that noise… or you'd better as you're going to be hearing it all weekend long – The Trip Out isn't yer normal stationary rally where people just ride there, park up, get pissed, and then ride 'ome Sunday, y'see. No, folk ride their bikes, and drive their hot rods, around the whole weekend long, and the growl of slow-moving open-piped motors, twins and eights, becomes like a soundtrack to the event.

The brainchild, as I'm sure you know, of Andy and Anna Porter, The Trip Out isn't so much a motorcycle rally per se –

it's more an automotive get-together of cool older bikes n' cars of all ages and varieties with an emphasis on vintage-style choppers and hot rods. The whole feel of the event is retro: bikes, cars, fashions, music etm., and it's so laid-back it's almost horizontal. There's music from the underground, almost psychedelic, scene from the likes of the Jim Jones All Stars, Sister Suzie, The Bad Habits, The Trouble, The McCurdy Brothers, Los Dedos, and Dois Padres; a pop-up cocktail bar (as well as a 'normal' bar, obviously); an array of quality food for carnivores, veggies, and vegans; artisan coffee; a Bike Show Tent with rare and wonderous custom bikes from here and abroad; a main marquee with the bands, DJs, and the Meyer Dancers (The Trip Out's resident go-go dancers); the late-night Lounge; cult biker and hot rod films in the Chill-Out Tent; a skate ramp with pro-skater demos; vendors from far and wide showcasing an eclectic mix of wares (bike stuff, clothing, and more); and there's also Saturday afternoon games (more on those in a moment); and the huge Saturday afternoon bike and car show that attracts all the coolest vehicles on site. If you haven't seen the video I did of the show last year, log on to our YouTube channel and look it up to get a flavour of what it's like.

Meself and 'er, and a couple of others, spent Friday night just sitting on the many bales of straw dotted around the main arena, or mooching round the stalls, and suddenly it was dark, and then gone

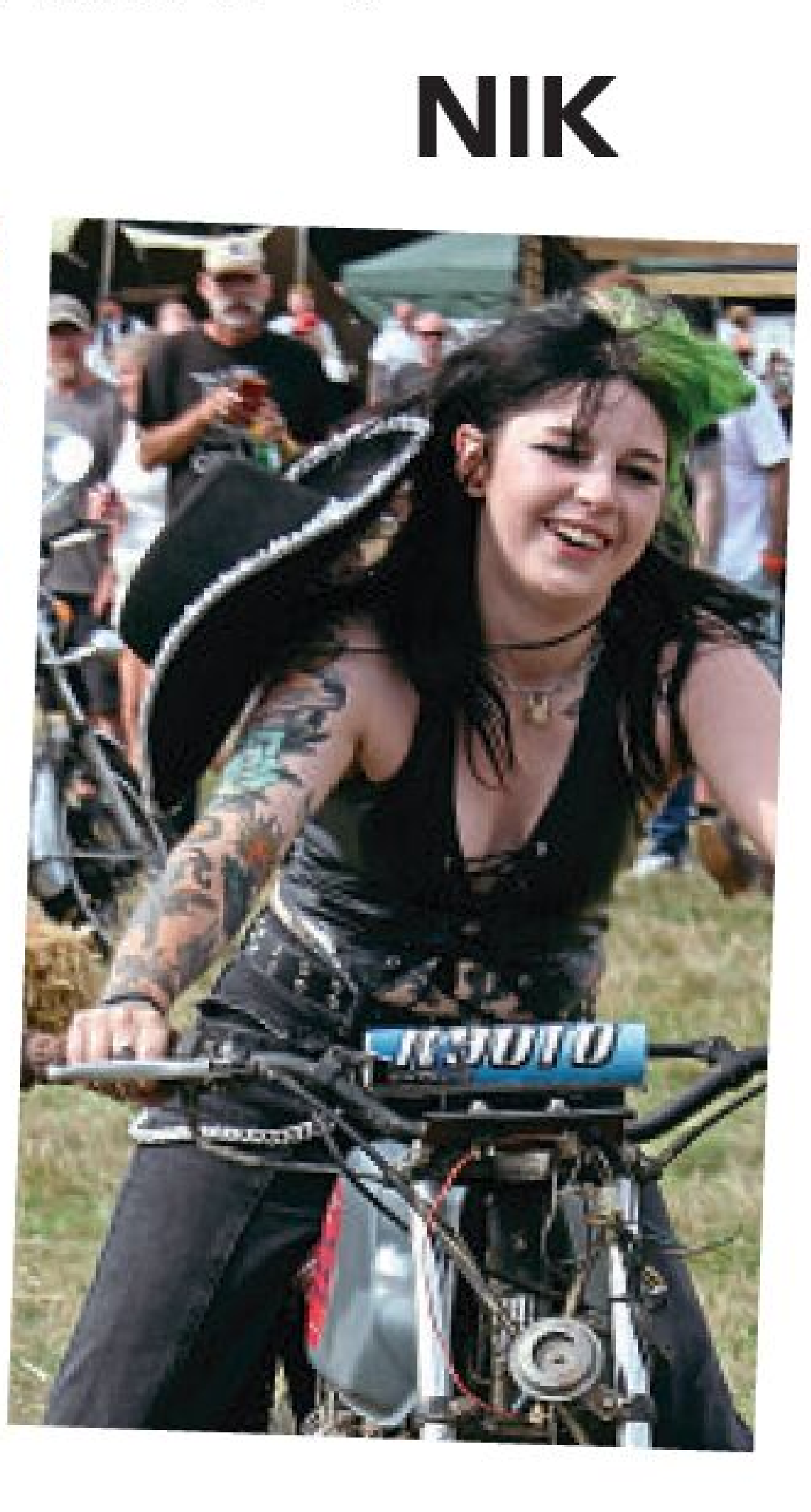


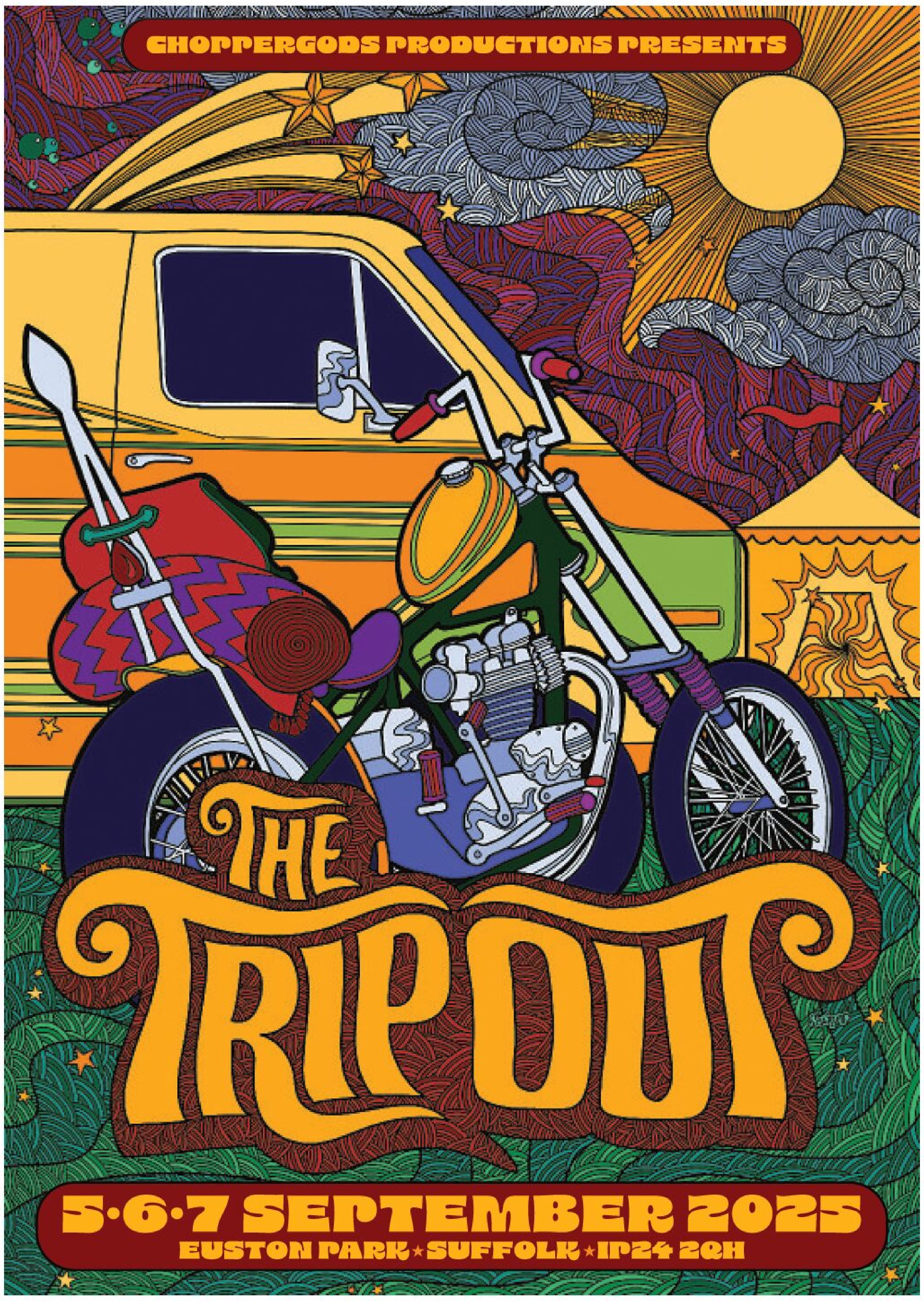
midnight. Saturday day was spent once again mooching and trying to avoid the call of the cocktail bar's excellent mojitos until at least the sun'd set (somewhere), until the games, ably compered by Andy, began. There were just two main ones: the Wiener Bite (the age-old biker favourite of pillions trying to eat a sausage on a string), and the plank ride, both of which were the cause of much hilarity. I can't help feeling that using a bike n' sidecar for the Wiener Bite is cheating somewhat, but it was still funny, and mention in despatches must go to Layla (yes, that Layla, of the BSA fame) for being the only person to do the plank ride from end to end without coming off (the plank or the bike).

And the bikes? Well, particular favourites for me were Toddy's glorious barnfind-looking AJS; Mark Gale's sand-race Flattie (as featured in BSH last year); the late Shaun 'Mr Clever' Lee's wonderful 'Scrounger' BSA; and… and… and… everywhere you looked there were Flatties and Knucks, Pans, Ironheads and Shovels, Triumphs and BSAs, Indians, older Kwaks and Suzis, choppers and bobbers, classics and stockers. It was old bike heaven, even for some as invested in '90s oil-boilers as me, and just sitting in the sunshine, watching the flashes of light off chrome, listening to the blort-blort-blort of old vees and parallels chugging by, breathing in the burnt mineral oil smells, was near as dammit the perfect way to spend a late summer afternoon.

Tickets for this year's Trip Out, 5-7 September, are on sale now at **www.thetripout.co.uk** See you there!

NIK

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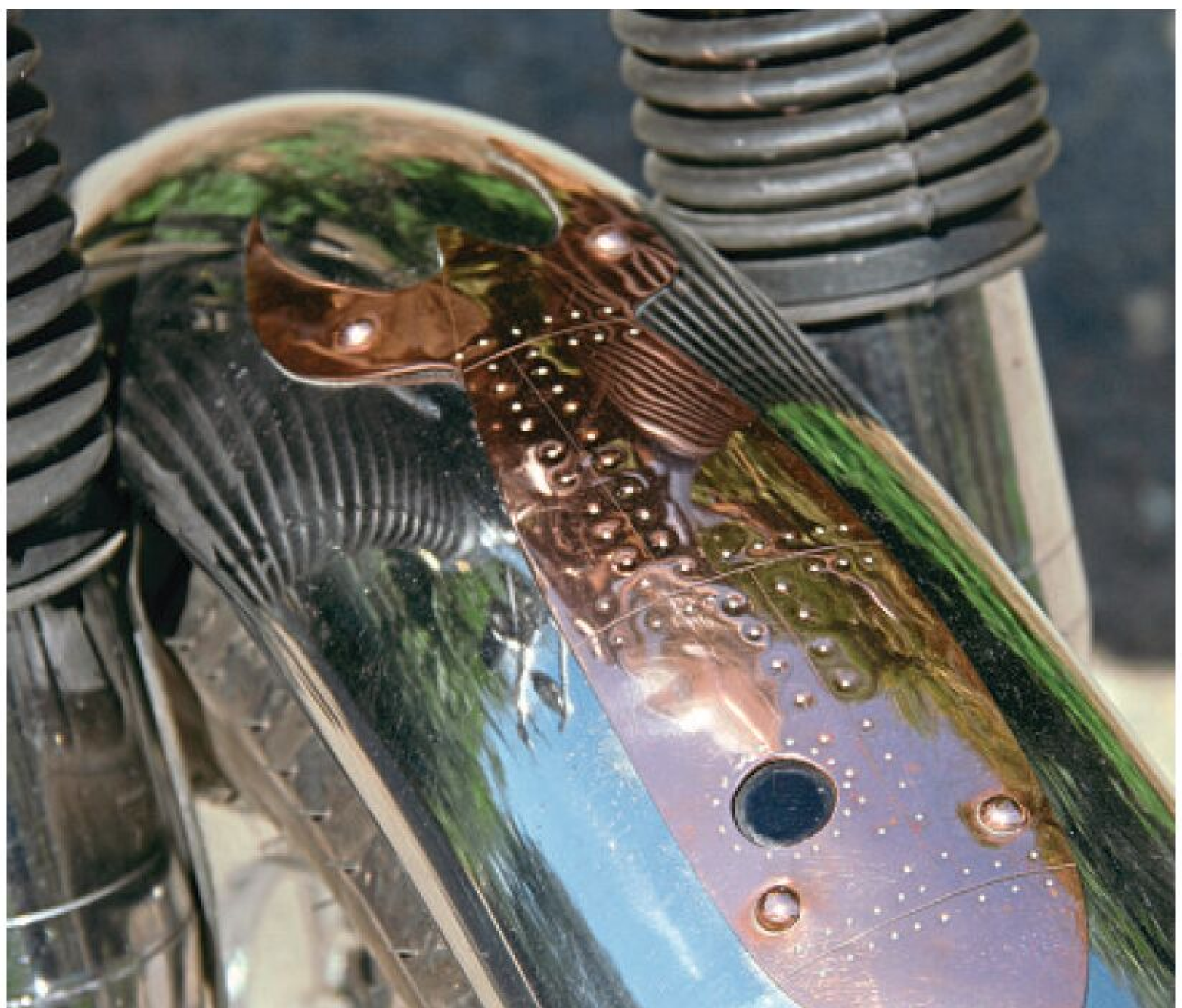
SCR

SHOW-WINNING RAMBLER



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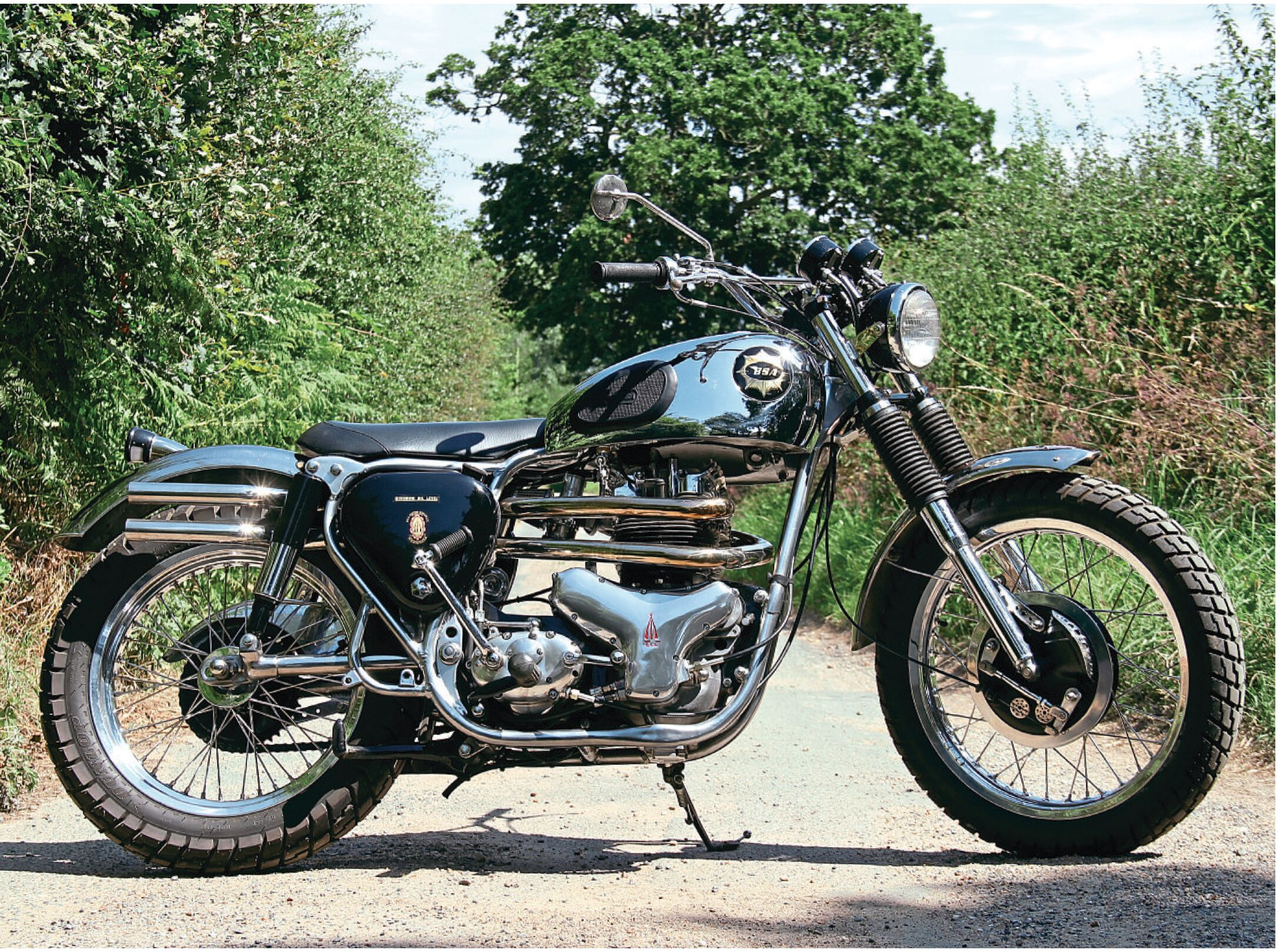
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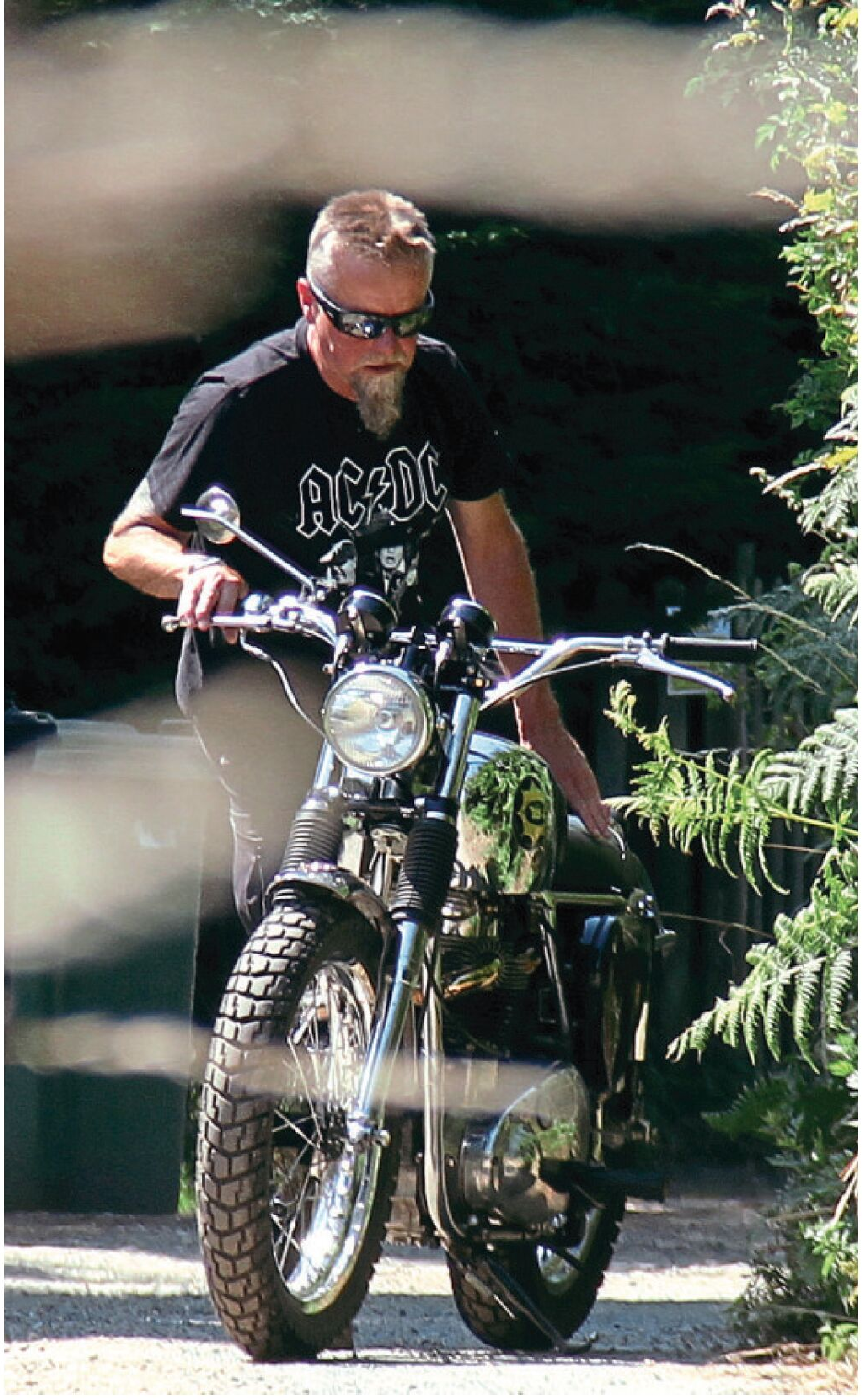

IT belongs to, and was built by, a guy from up Norwich way called Clive, and has a history going back decades, four o' them, nearly five, to be precise, although it didn't always look like this. I'll let Clive hisself tell you about it, shall I, seeing as he went to all the trouble o' writing it all down?

"It all began in about 1980, at which time I was a 20-year-old young biker with about five years' experience riding 50-250cc bikes on L plates. I took my test, and got my full licence, and that meant I could step up to a bigger bike – back then the trend was starting to move away from British bikes towards Japanese ones as times were changing but, me being a young lad and not having much cash, I was on the lookout for a cheap, big, British bike. A small local dealer had a BSA A10 for sale for £250, but there was a slight problem in that it had no V5 – the owner'd brought the bike in for an estimate to have some work done, but'd never come back. The shop didn't have any contact details and, after six months'd passed, contacted the DVLA only to be told the reg' number didn't exist. As he'd done everything he could to find the owner, to no avail, he was now within his legal rights to sell it, without a reg', of course. I took a chance and bought it and, on getting it home, I noticed the 'plate looked as though it'd just been stuck on and, as I peeled it off, it revealed a different registration underneath. I contacted the DVLA with the new reg', and the frame number, and they had them on record, and issued me with a new V5 – happy days, job done.

"The old twenty-year-old Beezer was in fair condition, in a bit of a café racer style with several Eddie Dow parts including a twin-leading-shoe front brake and uprated fork dampers, so I got a good deal in the end. The engine, though, was in need of a rebore, but it was already at +60 thou' and, at the time, I couldn't find another thick-flange barrel so it all got put back together with just a light overhaul. It ran okay, but it was always in the back of my mind.

"The café racer style was not for me – I wanted a chopper! I wasn't able to do cutting and welding back then, so I just lowered the rear shocks and put in slightly over-length forks (and a different tank and 'bars), and I joined the National Chopper Club. For about six years the bike got used every day to go backwards and forwards to work, and for going on Club runs – I was doing about 10,000 miles a year and, towards the end of that, the poor old engine was getting to be in a bit of a bad state, smoking and leaking. Then came a series of driving bans, one on top of another – I was well and truly in the naughty corner. I left the Club, dismantled the BSA, and put it under the bench.

"Eventually (yes, there were a lot of bans) I got my licence back but, by that time, I'd sold a lot of the chop stuff, but I kept the main parts (frame, engine, gearbox, wheels, etc.). Many bikes came and went after that, but the A10 remained under the bench for about 40 years. Then, a couple of years ago or so, the time came to start a new project and so out it came. This time, though, it wasn't going to be a chopper – no, this time it was going to be a scrambler.

"The old and worn-out engine was stripped to be dealt with. I got some +80thou' pistols from Austria which, when they landed, were 1mm higher but, at the same time, I'd planned to send it to legendary BSA specialists SRM Engineering to get the crankshaft and top end redone, and they do billet con-rods which, by luck, were 1mm shorter. They did a fantastic job; regrinding the crankshaft and doing an end oil-feed conversion, and giving the head the full treatment, including bigger RGS (Rocket Gold Star – the performance version of the A10) valves, the cam from a Spitfire (BSA, not Supermarine), and a larger 30mm Concentric (Amal) carb (the A10 normally has one that's about 27mm). I got it all back, assembled the engine, and added an electronic ignition, changing the wiring to 12V/negative earth (all the bulbs are LED). I also changed the gearing to a much higher ratio as I remembered it always seemed to be revving high back in the day. The exhausts, which duck behind the oil tank for no other reason than I wanted them to, took me three attempts to make, and about three months to finish – all stainless, cut and welded, at home, in my shed.

"The frame went off to Adam at Aerocoat to be blasted and powder-coated (fantastic job, as always), and I made a slim single seat. The tank is a one-off from eBay (I can't remember what firm, but I've not seen another one like it – all chrome, normally they're painted on the top, with the bigger four-inch tank badges), and the front and rear mudguards I picked up somewhere and cut down and polished. I didn't really want paint, you see, other than on the oil tank and toolbox, because scramblers back in the day didn't really have painted parts… yes, I know they weren't as shiny as this either, but who cares?

"I've now had the bike on the road for about two years, and I love riding it – it's comfortable, starts easily, does about 60 to the gallon, and looks just right. It's been a long journey and, yes, I am a bit of a sentimental old fart, but the bike was registered the same year as me, 1960, so what can I say – it's like it's a part of me… but probably in better condition."

SPEC:
1960 BSA A10 650cc engine (BSA Super Rocket head, 1.5-inch rockers, Gold Star valves, BSA Spitfire 357 cam, 30mm Amal Concentric carb, aftermarket air-filter, SRM Engineering crankshaft/billet rods/+80-thou' barrels/pistons/head-work, 4-spring/alloy basket clutch, 12v electronic ignition, homemade stainless exhausts, remote oil filter)/frame/forks/yokes/grips/oil tank (modified)/battery tray (modified)/tool-box (modified)/swingarm/shocks/rear hub, Dunlop tyres, 2.15x19-inch front wheel, Eddie Dow /TLS drum brake/uprated fork damoers, BSA scrambler 'bars, aftermarket switchgear, BSA Rocket Gold Star clocks, aftermarket front mudguard (modified), one-off chrome fuel tank, homemade seat, aftermarket stainless rear mudguard (modified), 3.00x18-inch rear wheel, homemade torque arm, homemade loom, aftermarket LED headlight/tail-light/indicators

FINISH:
Paint & number-plate painted on rear mudguard by owner, frame powder-coated by Aeromax Coatings (**07960 557057** or **www.aeromaxcoatings.co.uk**), polishing by owner

ENGINEERING:
Bike built & all work by owner except crank/rods/bores/head-work by SRM Engineering (**01970 627771** or **www.srmclassicbikes.com**)

THANKS TO:
"SRM Engineering for the engine work ("10 out of 10!"); & Adam at Aerocoat…"

CLIVE
PICS BY **NIK**

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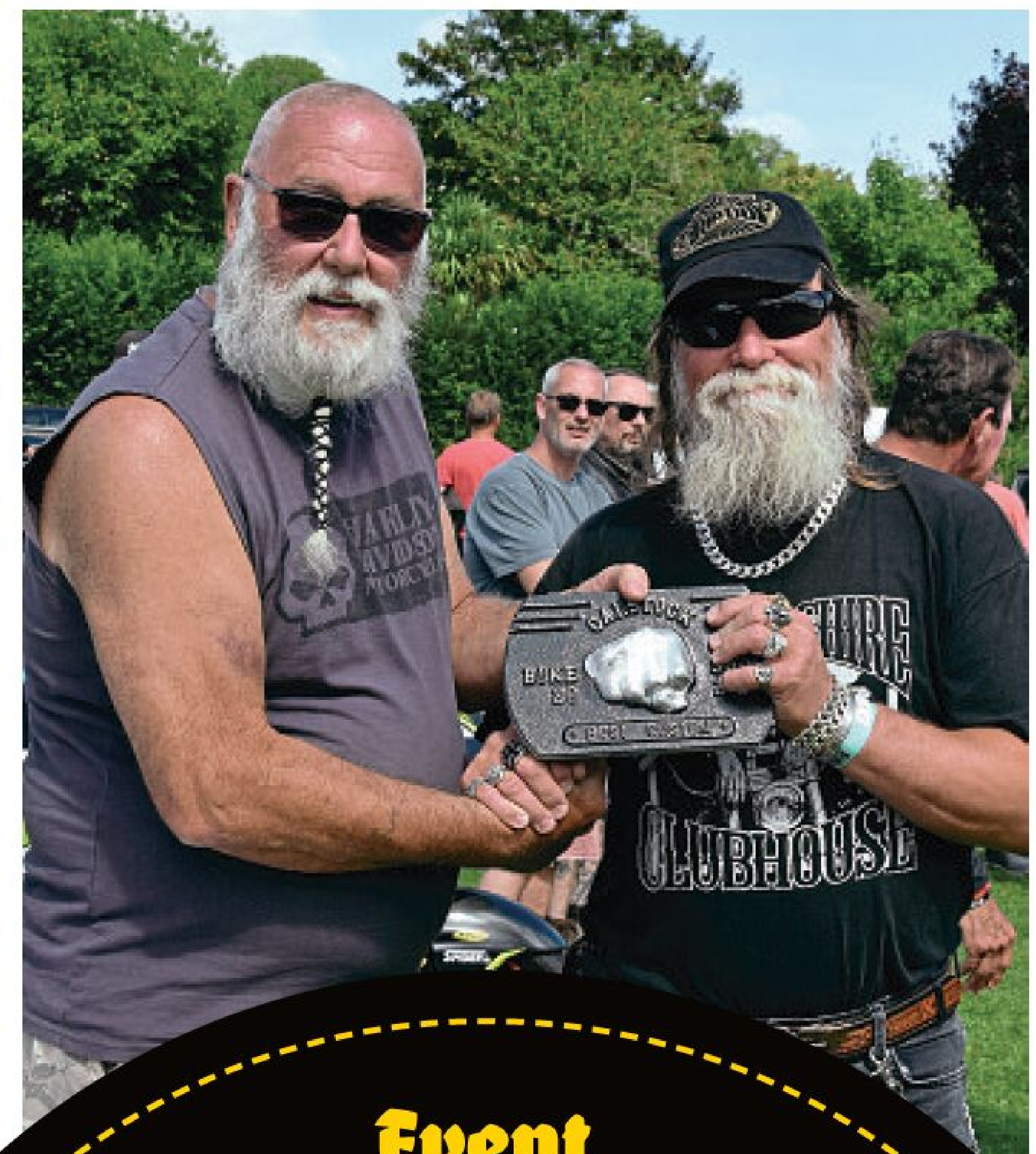
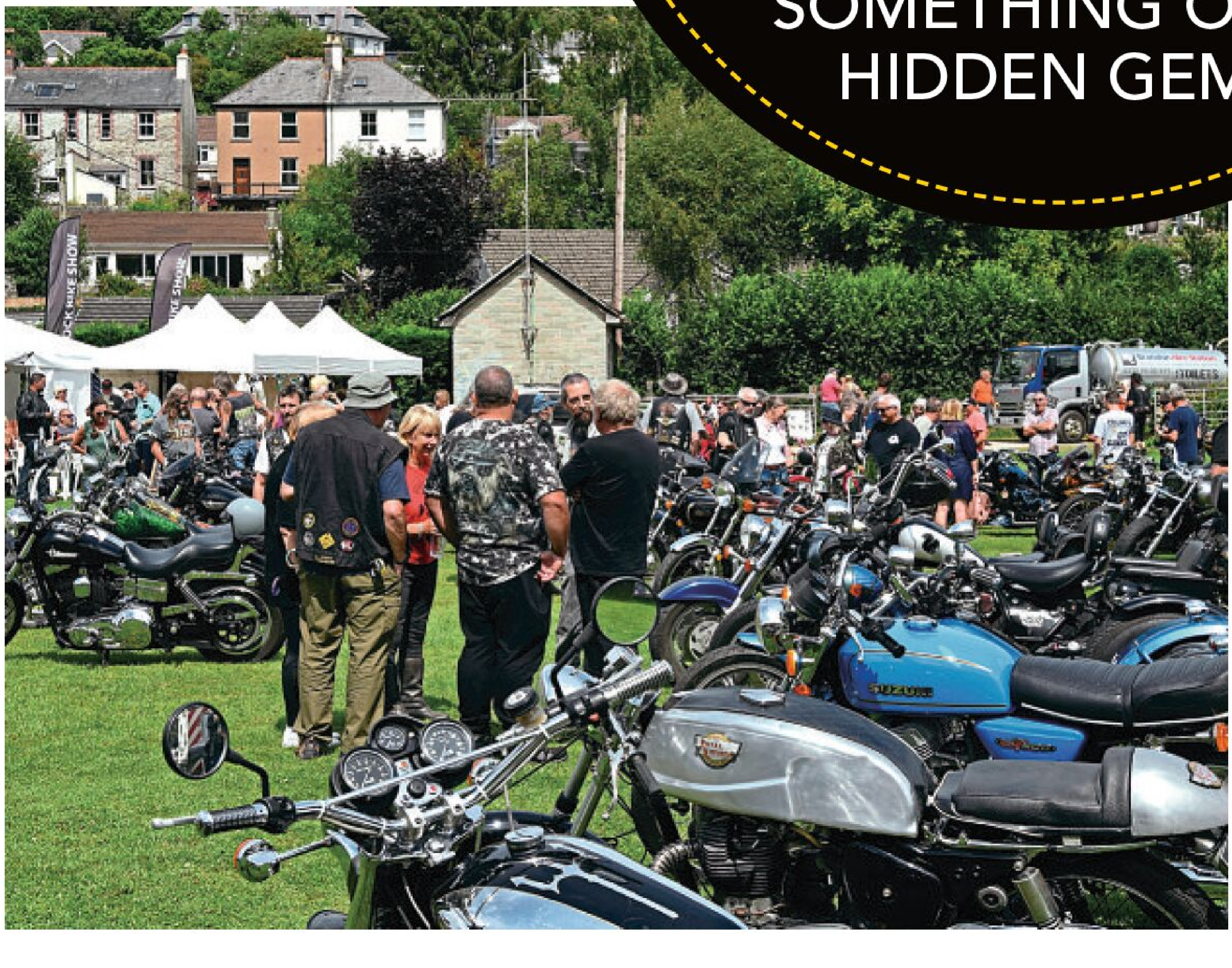
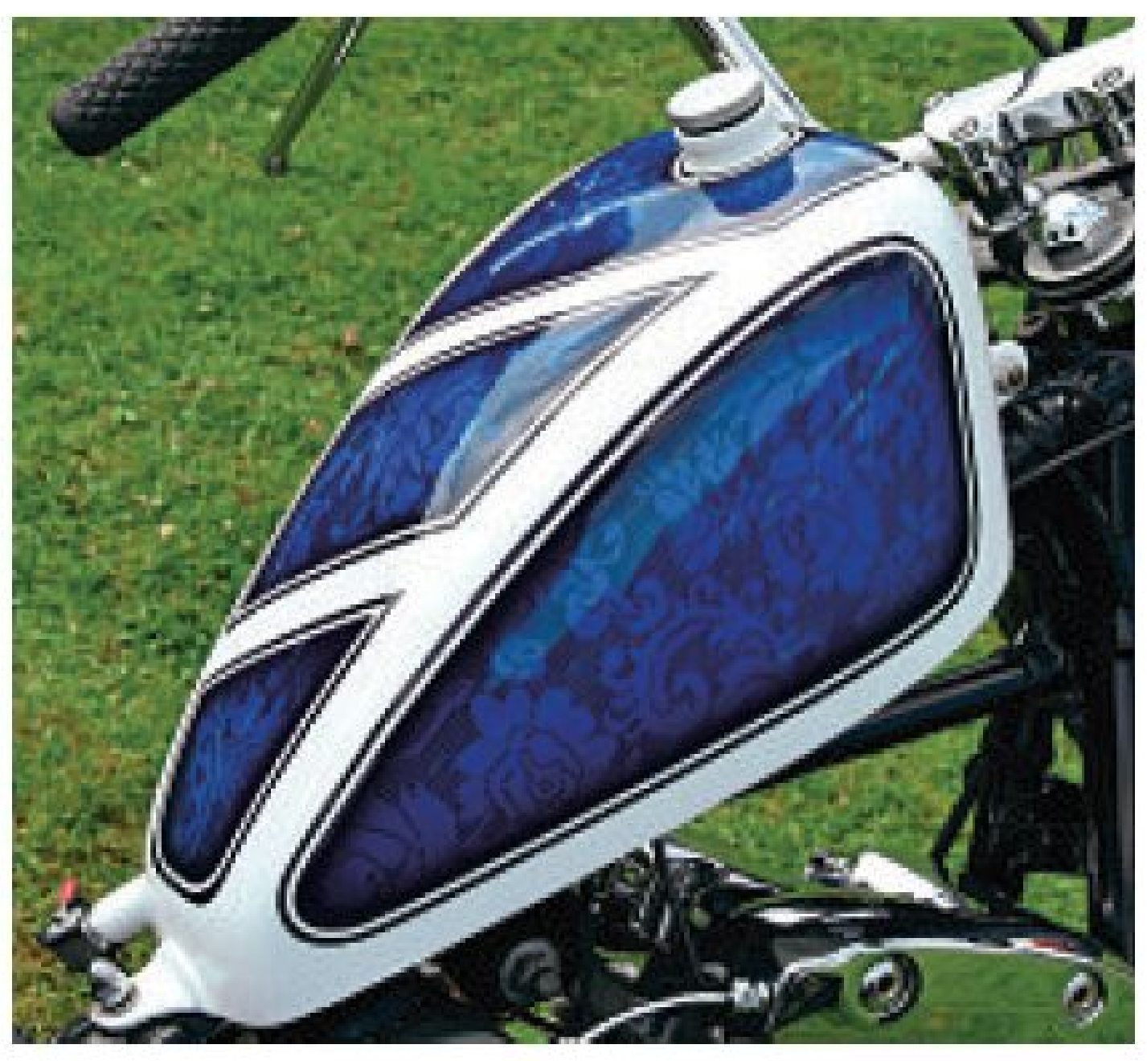


Event

CALSTOCK BIKE SHOW

CALSTOCK BIKE SHOW IS, OR RATHER WAS, SOMETHING OF A HIDDEN GEM.





COOPER COBRA

Tucked away on a playing field at the end of the first (or last, depending on how you look at it) village in Cornwall, on a bend in the Tamar, the show started in 2000 as benefit for, of all things, the local rowing club to keep the village regatta going.

Founded by Malcolm and Tara with the help of a lot of villagers and friends, the first show had 35 tents and 36 bikes, but by 2019 the show was going great guns, with a packed campsite and four days of fun and frolics, welcoming 700 campers and 800 locals. After that, of course, things hit a bump in the road until the show returned last year with a simple one-day bash in the village hall, but it returned with a flourish in 2024.

With a roughly 50/50 split of customs and classics, and a few modern roadsters scattered round, pretty much everything was modded in one way or another. There was a massive party marquee with a DJ pounding out classic rock (which these days includes the Beastie Boys' 'Sabotage'), bands in the evening, and beer and five cider pumps (no lager – you had to go into the village pub for that, and they were busy all weekend, too, so the show fills village businesses' coffers). There was some of the best show catering you could imagine, including the WI selling cakes, as well as offering first aid, while a gentle breeze from the river took the edge off the heat. All was chilled and mellow.

In the show, Best Chop was Kernow Ken's spectacular 90,000-mile Red Baron Shovelhead; Best Rat was villager Diesel Dean Thorne's occasionally running XS650/Honda scrambler thing; and Best Paint was Jay's beautiful blue and white Harley (which won extra points for most imaginative use of a set of net curtains in a paint job). Best in Show was master blacksmith Robbie Savill's BSA Gold Star DB32 scrambler, rescued from a pile of parts (the frame'd been left in a hedge for so long the front of the frame loop had rusted away) – he, from Liskeard, did almost every bit of work on the bike himself.

Unfortunately, back in March this message appeared on the event's Facebook Page: 'It is with great regret that we have to announce that the Calstock Bike Show will no longer be running. After 25 years we have finally had to say enough. The organisers are not getting any younger, and all the work required to put on the show is too much for us to handle and, with more and more red tape and expense, it has become untenable. We are all so very grateful for everyone who has attended over the years – you made it a special place to come and enjoy this little Cornish village of ours."

RIP Calstock Bike Show.

OLI HULME

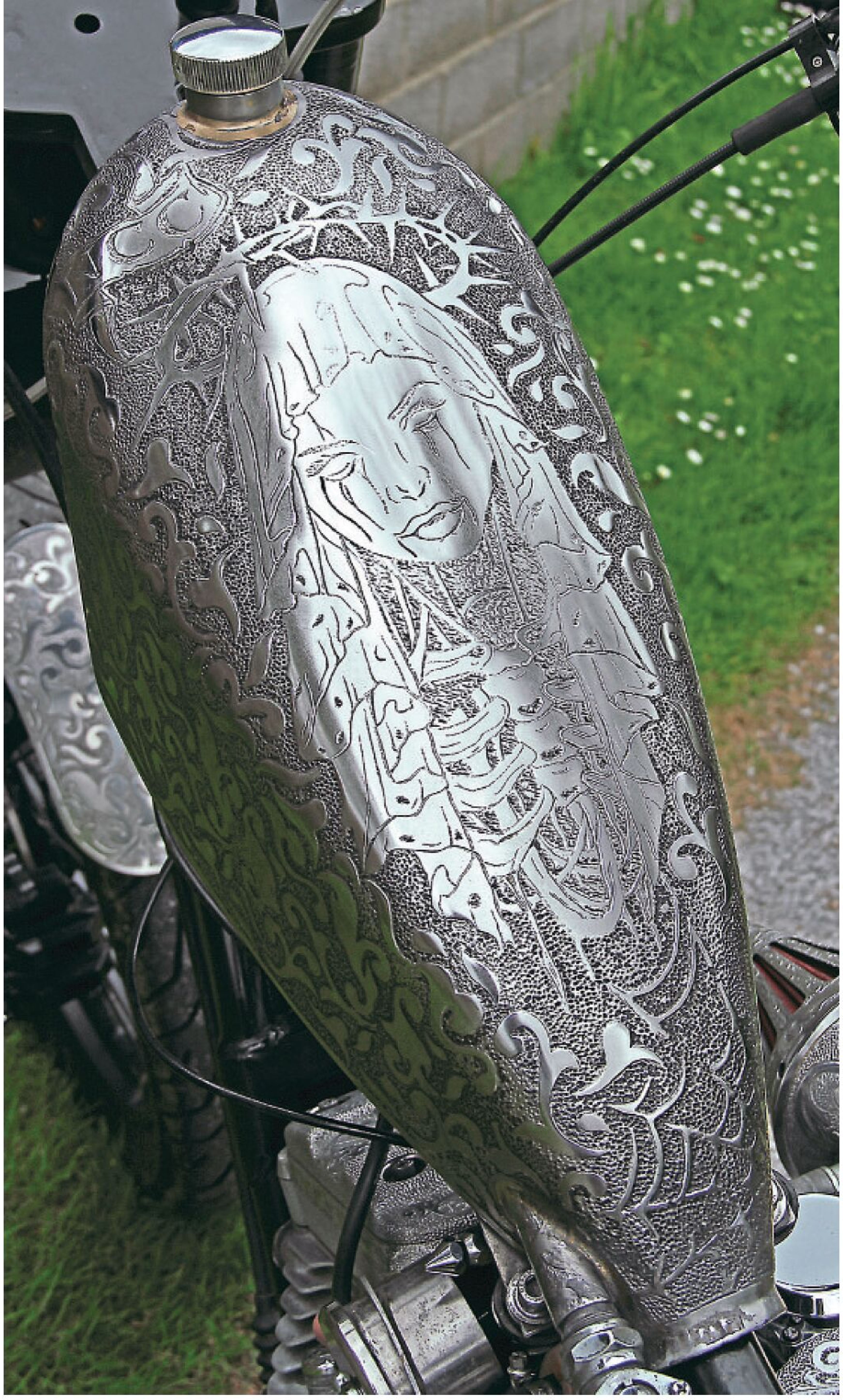
CHISELLED* GOOD LOOKS...

SO LAST YEAR, ON THE EPIC TRIP AROUND THE SOUTH-WEST PHOTOGRAPHING BIKES, I'M SITTING OUTSIDE JIMY FROM NCC SOMERSET'S PLACE, DRINKING COFFEE IN THE SUN, WHEN THE PEACE'S DISTURBED BY THE BARK OF A V-TWIN ON OPEN 'PIPES – RON FROM NCC LONDON'D TURNED UP.

*Well, Dremmelled...

START
OFF
RUN

NGRAVE



He'd ridden down from The Smoke to Jimy's in Zummerzet… sorry, sorry, Somerset on the hardtail Sportster Jimy'd built for him, and was riding back the next day – 150-plus miles each way; no mean feat on a bike with no rear suspension (especially on our blighted roads). I had indicated, a few days before, that I'd be happy to go to London at some point and photograph it, but Jimy'd laughed and said (something along the lines of): "Naa, the ride'll do him good…"

A couple o' years back Ron'd bought a Bandit 600 chop Jimy'd done. "I had that bike for a year, and absolutely loved it, but it was, really, a little small for someone my height and I was looking for something to replace it. In 2024 Jimy was doing Kickback, and asked me to bring the Suzuki to display it. He was taking the Sportster chop he'd just finished, and the moment I saw it I absolutely loved the look and decided to see if he'd have the Suzuki back and sell me the Harley."

The Harley was one Jim'd picked up from one of the guys from NCC Kent – a 1200 Sporty motor in an unknown hardtail frame with a set of RM250 Suzuki old-school motocross forks, a Triumph front wheel and a stock Sporty back 'un, and he'd almost immediately pulled it apart and raked and extended the frame to get it to sit more pleasingly, changing and reworking parts to suit as he went. The tank and rear mudguard, the parts that really catch the eye, were from his stock of parts taken from previous builds, and are a Lowbrow Customs item and a Coba Valley Cycles item respectively, and they are now, as you can see, seriously engraved.

Ron, y'see, had always wanted to engrave a bike, completely – he'd studied art in his native Paris, and started engraving glass at a young age. He started a new business, N-Grave Creative Custom, in April last year, and's been engraving motorcycles since then. Once he'd got the Sporty back to his place in That London, he started on it, engraving the tank with a theme of death and religion, with a representation of the Virgin Mary with a skeletal body, and so, so much intricate detail (including a crown of thorns, and a spider's web) that it makes your head spin just trying to take it all in. Similarly, the larger emblem on the rear mudguard is a stylised Medusa, and what makes this, and the tank, all that more impressive is that they're not, as I guessed, specially made, thicker wall, alloy items designed to be engraved – they're just steel, normal steel, with an infinite amount of care taken over them.

In fact, just about everything engravable has been: the rocker covers, the spike air-cleaner, the ground-pounder-style exhausts (love the way the rear one's blued just below the wrap), the seat mount, and the tiny front mudguard are just where he was up to when I took these pics in June last year. It's all done by hand using a specially prepared Dremel and, as you can imagine, takes forever to get this level of detail, but it's more than worth the effort, especially now as, following the passing of the much-respected Don Blocksidge, people who can do engraving to this sort of detail're few and far between.

Since these pics were taken, he's made some radical changes to the bike – it now has a 10-inch over wide-glide front end (engraved, of course), and a new cross-shaped sissy-bar made by a blacksmith, a set of engraved apes to replace the wide 'bars it has here, and an engraved metal seat to replace the snakeskin one you see 'ere (hmm, that might make 300+ mile overnight trips a bit more taxing, eh?), and he's about to start on his oil tank, too… well, as and when work for other people allows, as he accepts commissions to do work for anyone who wants such levels of exquisite detail on the bikes (or cars, or shotguns, or owt really). Contact him on **07725 145599** or go to his website at **www.ngravecreations.com**, or his Facebook and Instagram pages.

NIK

SPEC:
2006 H-D Sportster 1200 engine (aftermarket spike air-cleaner, aftermarket ground-pounder-style exhausts), 1961 Triumph frame (modified), homemade forwards, Triumph front wheel (modified)/disc, Suzuki RM250 forks, unknown caliper, unknown slab yokes, braided brake lines, one-off 'bars, aftermarket speedo/master-cylinder/grips, H-D switches, homemade front mudguard, homemade belly-pan, Lowbrow Customs tank (modified), aftermarket snakeskin sprung seat, Coba Valley Cycles rear mudguard (modified), aftermarket sissy-bar, H-D oil tank, homemade battery box, H-D rear wheel/brake, aftermarket headlight/tail-light

FINISH:
Frame painted by Jimy, all engraving/polishing by owner at NGrave Creative Custom (**www.ngravecreations.com**, Facebook & Instagram)

ENGINEERING:
Bike rebuilt/changed & frame mods by Jimy

THANKS TO:
"Jimy for all his hard work…"

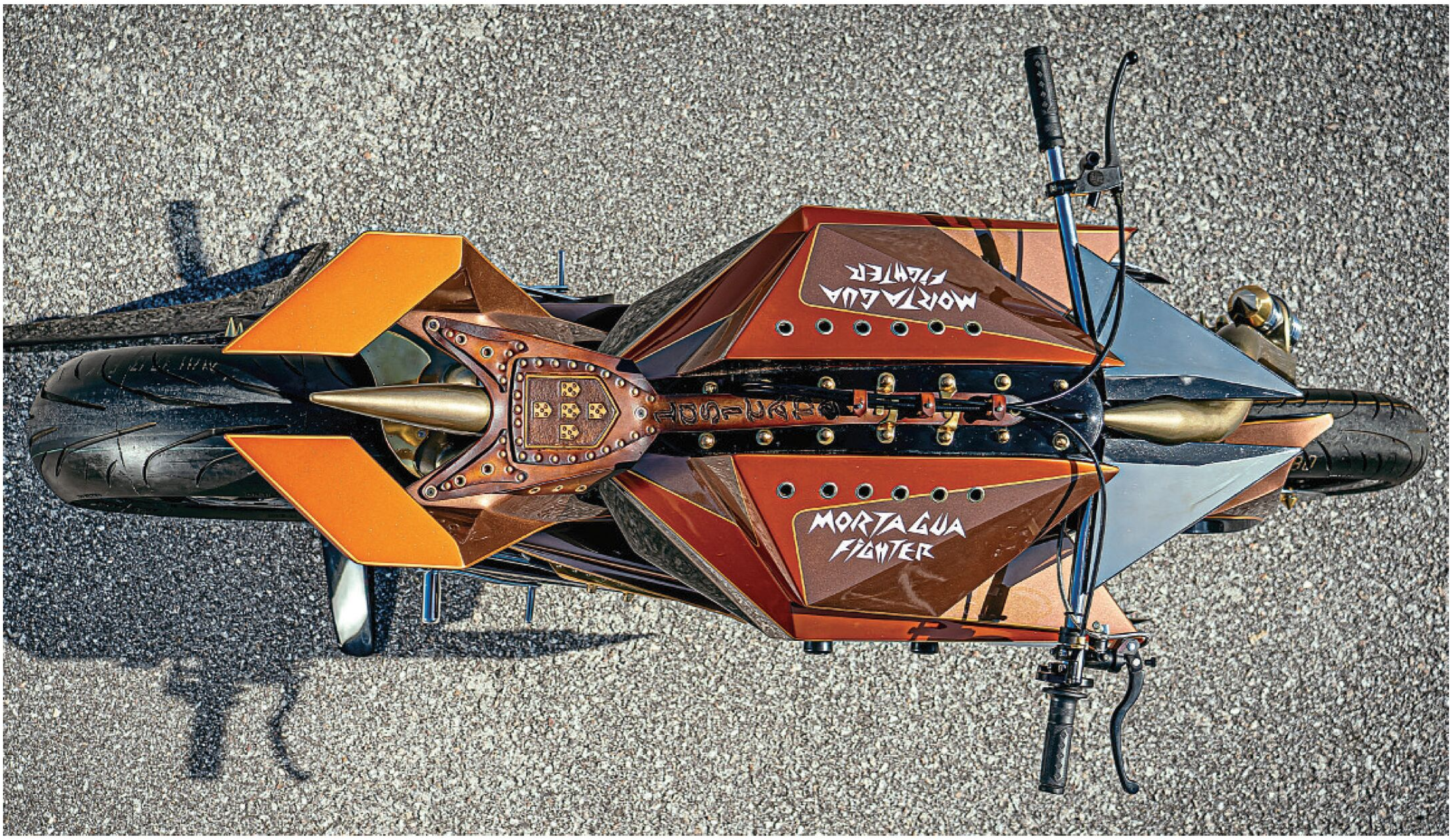
MORTAGUA FIGHTER 12-

'CUST

ANA'

MORTAGUA
FIGHTER
AVON AVGS

IT'S BEEN A FEW YEARS SINCE WE LAST HAD ONE OF CARLOS 'MORTAGUA FIGHTER' RODRIGUES' INCREDIBLE CREATIONS IN BSH – THE LAST WAS HIS 600 BANDIT, INFERNAL CHAOS, BACK IN ISSUE 425 NEARLY SIX YEARS AGO. THAT WAS HIS NINTH BUILD – THE ONE YOU SEE HERE IS HIS TWELFTH: LUSITANA.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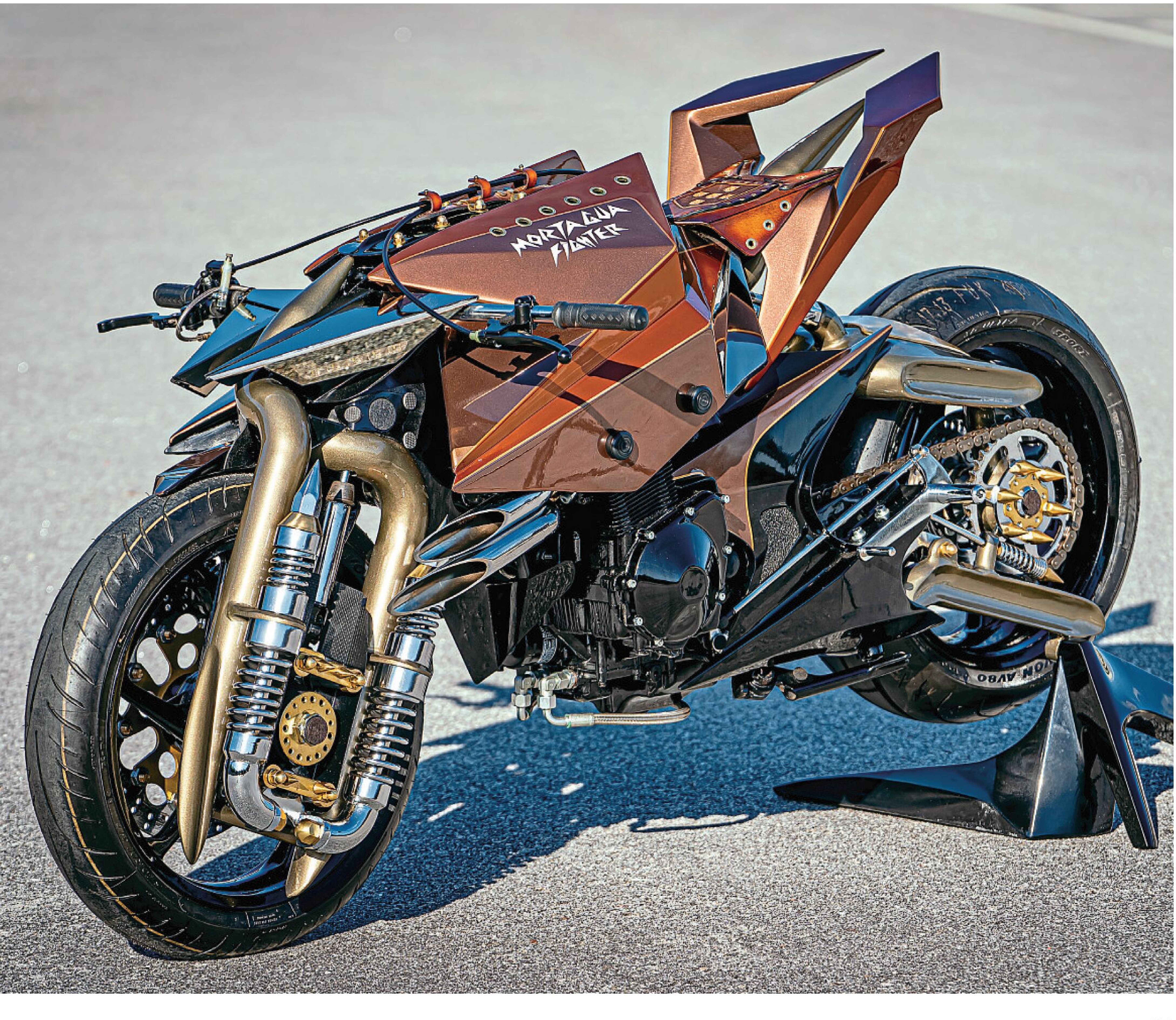

MORTA GUA
FIGHTER

AS it's been more than half a decade since we last had one of his bikes in, I'd best remind you of something that's really important about Carlos' bikes: he's not allowed, by law, to ride them. He lives, you see, in the town of Mortagua, hence the name, in northern Portugal, and their draconian, in comparison to the rest of Europe, anti-modification laws mean that his bikes're just so, so illegal in his native land that if he were to be seen out on the roads on any of them by the local police force, they'd be well within their rights to confiscate it and crush it. Yet still he builds, knowing he can never ride them, save for when he takes them abroad for shows, and continues to push the boundaries of what you can and can't do, designing and creating probably the most radical bikes in at least Europe, if not the world – we often talk in these pages about bike building being a compulsion, an addiction, but I think he has to be the probably the worst afflicted man on the planet.

SPEC:
1995 Suzuki GSX-R 750WN engine (radiator removed, one-off exhaust, one-off windowed clutch cover), one-off frame, one-off rear-sets, Marvic 17-inch single-sided magnesium wheels (120 front tyre, 190 rear), one-off double fork/shock front suspension, one-off single-sided radial caliper front brake, Ducati 748 320mm front brake disc (modified), one-off handlebars, aftermarket controls/grips, one-off bodywork (front mudguard/fairing/fuel tank/seat/tail-piece), one-off twin parallel shock rear suspension, one-off single-sided swingarm, GSX-R 750 rear disc, Honda CBR900RR caliper, one-off loom, one-off LED headlight

FINISH:
Design & paint & airbrushing by Sergio Design, polishing by Mortagua Fighter, chroming by Perbal Chrome

ENGINEERING:
Bike built & all welding & engineering by Mortagua Fighter (Facebook/Instagram/YouTube)

Don't get me wrong, while his bikes, for very obvious reasons, aren't practical in any way, shape or form, they do all work; they start, run, and can be ridden, as anyone who's been to any of the Faro shows he's entered'll know as they'll've seen him ride them up on to the stage – he's won there, and at many other shows on the Continent, too, countless times, and filled the stage with tyre smoke at a fair few, too.

'Lusitana' (the old name for the region that was to become Portugal), as the new bike's been christened, came about due to him being invited to display his creations at a much-publicised event in Germany last year: Streetfighters, The Fair. Plans for it were drawn up in 2022 and, given his reputation in the streetfighter world, one of the first things the organisers did was to invite him to bring as many of his out-of-this-world creations as he could. Not having built a new bike since the splendidly stealth-fighter-looking Mortagua 11 and so (I'd imagine), with his brain fizzing with new ideas, he decided to create something new for the event – this bike, Mortagua 12.

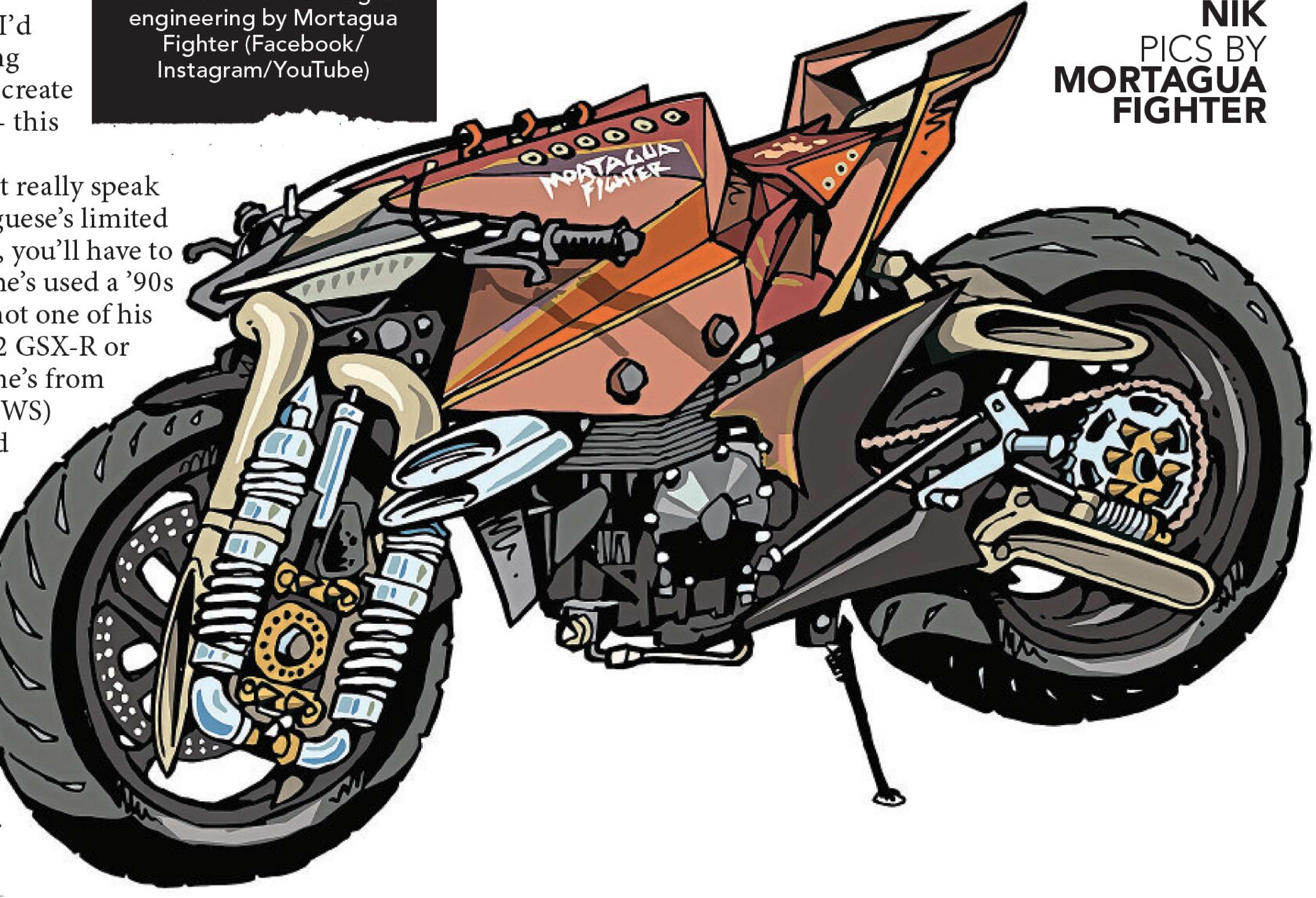
Now, because Carlos doesn't really speak much English (and my Portuguese's limited to "Duas cervejas, por favor"), you'll have to work with me a bit. As usual he's used a '90s Suzuki engine, but this time not one of his usual oil-boilers, like a pre-'92 GSX-R or pre-'07 Bandit – no, this engine's from a 1995 GSX-R 750 (a WR or a WS) that's had its radiator removed to slim everything down (and cos it doesn't really need it as he can't ride it far), and an amazing set of forward-exiting exhausts made for it (Carlos's done this style of exhaust before, and obviously likes the effect). Sadly, there're no pics of the bike undressed, so to speak, so we can't see the routing, but it's still clever no matter what. He made the massively over-engineered (and painted black so it effectively disappears) frame the 30-year-old Gixer motor hangs from, and also the extraordinary single-sided front and rear ends, both of which're an inspired design.

Starting with the rear, the upper and lower arms of the single-sided swingarm look, at first glance, like two separate pieces, but're actually cunningly connected behind between the offset rear sprocket and the rear disc of the single-sided Marvic magnesium wheel. Mounted off the top of them're two short, parallel, shock absorbers, intentionally almost hidden by the front sprocket cowling and the fighter-jet tail seat unit, and this level of hidden-in-plain-sight trickery (something Carlos's really good at) is replicated at the front with the creation of a single-sided, twin-leg/twin-shock design that appears to be (but may not be) based on that of an old plunger rear end, as used on a variety of old British and German motorcycles (although they only had one spring)... or that's what it looks like from the pics anyway. There's an externally-mounted front brake disc on the opposite side to the rear that uses a radial caliper on a Ducati 748 320mm disc, again on a single-sided Marvic wheel, and, again, the parts that kind o' hold it all together're painted black so you don't really see them – the eye's immediately drawn to the painted and chromed parts in a kind of motorcycular sleight of hand. As I said, Carlos's good at this, and most of his bikes make you go: "How the f**k does THAT work?!?"

Compared with the above, the sheet metal, as it really is, is relatively straightforward, if more than a little unconventional. There's a stainless steel 10-litre fuel tank hidden somewhere, I'm guessing, under the two 'tanks' mounted either side of the top tube, but as I can't see a filler anywhere (perhaps it's under the exquisitely-carved leather seat?) it could well be underneath in the frame section with the big braided line coming out it, drawn up to the carbs by a tucked-away fuel pump – who knows? I do like the fact that the throttle and clutch cables run along the top of the frame, held in place by an almost guitar fretboard arrangement of brass and leather, and I bloody love the aforementioned jet-fighter tail!

In all, it's another stunning creation from one of the most creative minds in custom bike building; a man who really doesn't think about bikes in the same way as the rest of us do, and continually strives to push the envelope. If you're going to this year's Moto Clube Faro Concentracion in July (17-20 July – **www.motoclubefaro.pt**), you'll most likely see 'Lusitana' there cos there's a Best in Show trophy with his name on it waiting to be collected... I mean, it may not win Best in Show, I know, but personally I wouldn't be betting against it, y'know?

NIK
PICS BY
MORTAGUA FIGHTER



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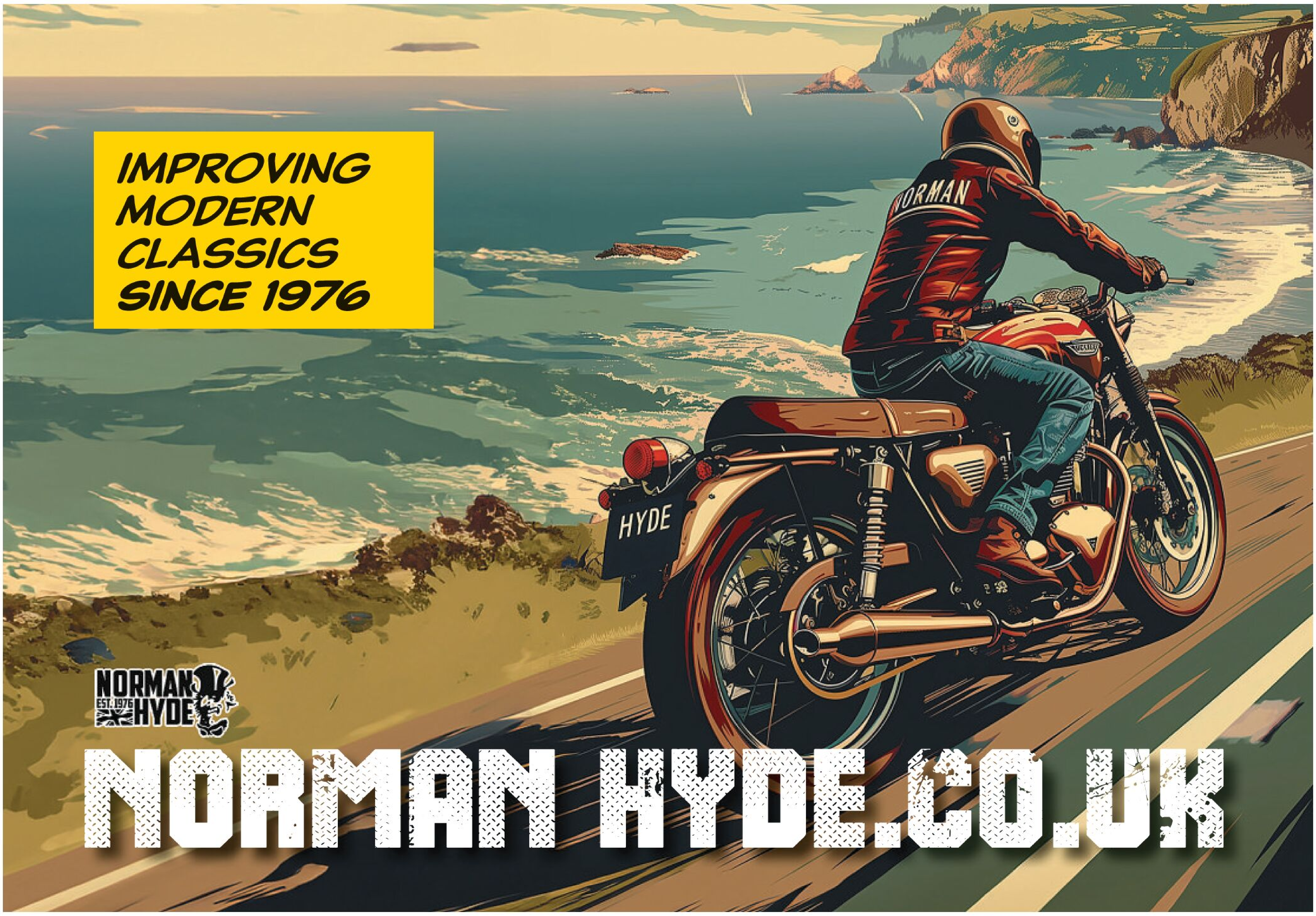

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BACK STREET HEROES

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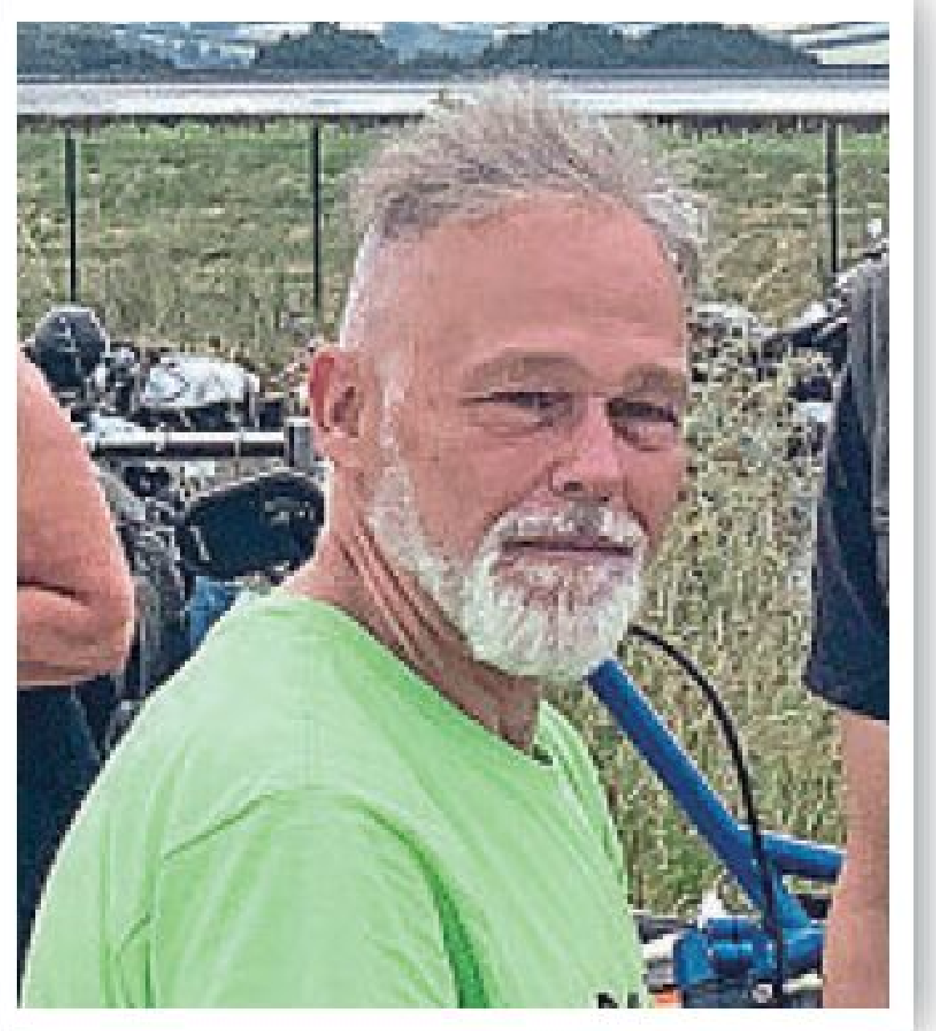

Eee, hasn't the world changed, eh? When I first started drinking (semi) legally, a beer (Younger's Tartan bitter if you remember it) cost 79p in the local biker pub, and *BSH* was, I think, 95p. These days both a beer (well, round my way anyway) and a *BSH* cost a fiver each, but what would you say if we could do you a special deal, and do you a BSH at just £4.08 instead of £5.40? That's a saving of (works out on fingers) 24% – nothing to be sniffed at!

NIK SAMSON,
EDITOR

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EX

FOR THOSE OF US OUT THERE WHO ARE SLIGHTLY YOUNGER THAN THE MEAN (AS IN THE AVERAGE AGE, NOT THOSE WHO NEVER BUY A ROUND), THE WORD 'EXCELSIOR' IS WHAT THE LATE, GREAT MARVEL SUPREMO STAN LEE'D OPINE AND, ALTHOUGH THE WORD ITSELF IS A LATIN ADJECTIVE MEANING 'HIGHER' OR 'MORE ELEVATED'*, HE TOOK IT AS MEANING 'UPWARD AND ONWARD TO GREATER GLORY' – A SUITABLE MOTTO, I THINK, FOR A CUSTOM BIKE.

XCELSIOR!

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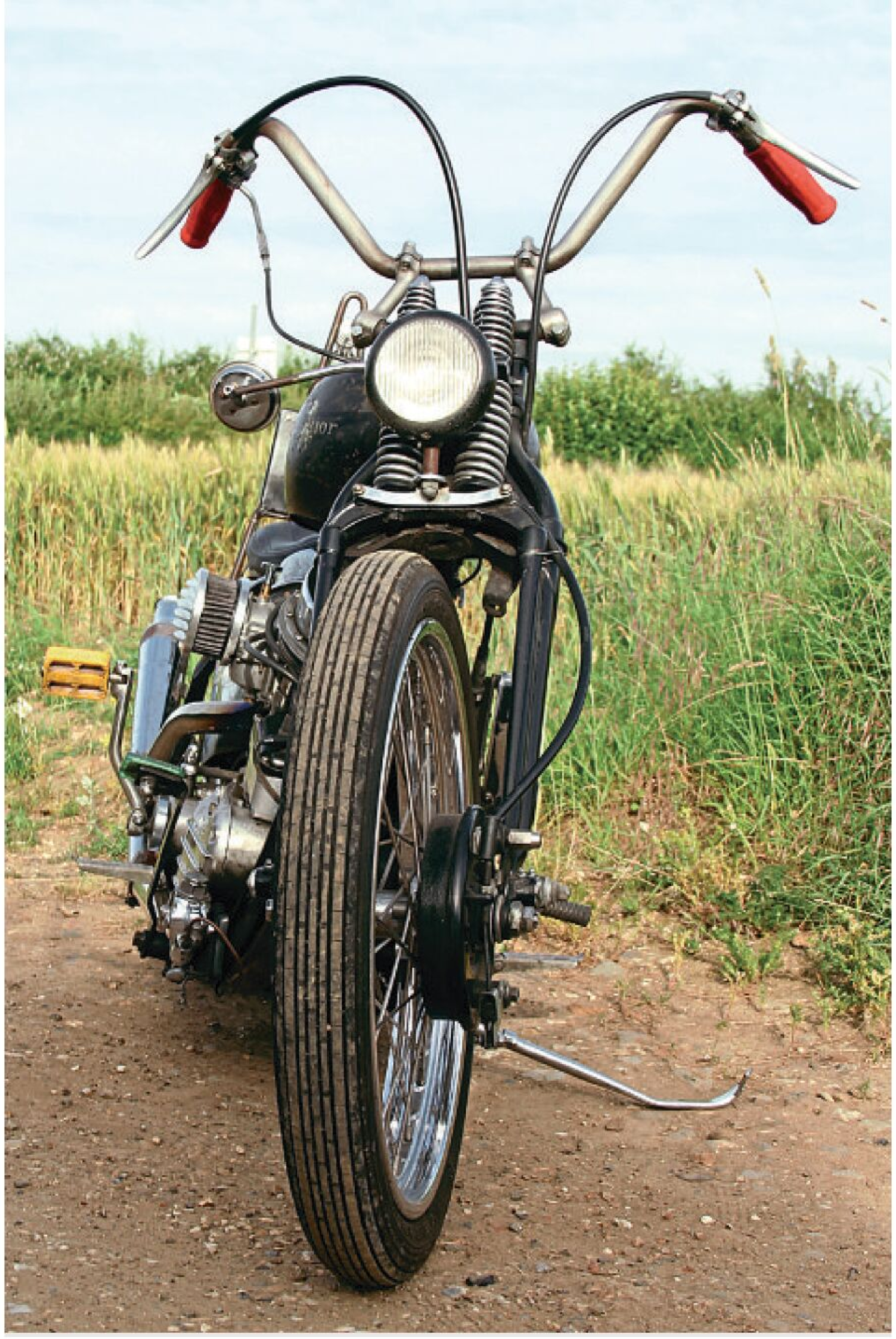
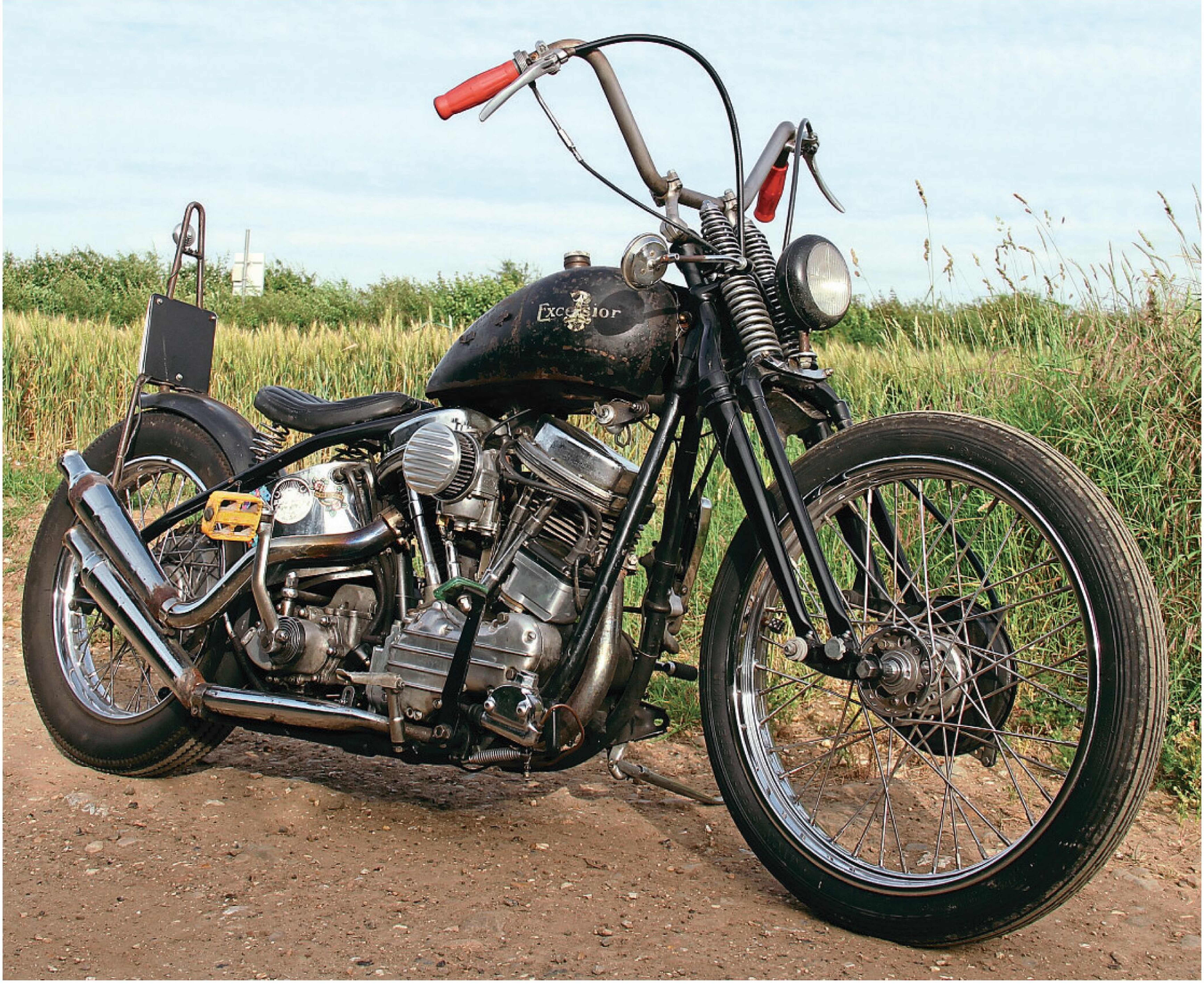
*In its noun form, it's also a term for fine wood shavings, commonly used as packing material, among many other uses, but we won't go into that 'ere, eh?




Excelsior

Excelsior

KICK IT

Those of us older and closer to smelling of wee and/or mothballs may remember that, in the dim and distant days of yore, there was a British motorcycle manufacturer called Excelsior who made bikes between 1896 (yes, really) and 1965, and so were, according to that Wikipedia, Britain’s first motorcycle manufacturer. They had some successes at the TT back in the Thirties, never actually winning but racking up a string of second and third places, and, for the Second World War, built a 98cc mini-bike called the Welbike, a small, collapsible motorcycle delivered in a pod by parachute, intended to be used by paratroopers for… er, ‘rapid’ movement around battlefields (rapid obviously having a slightly different meaning then to what it has now).

You may be wondering what all this guff about old (well, older…) and long-dead British motorcycles has to do with the wonderfully battered Panhead chopper that looks straight out of a ’60s bikexplotation film, and it’s the fact that Nick Gumbrell’s ’56 FL bears a tank that, as the very worn badges on it suggest, is from an Excelsior. Of course, it’s barely recognisable as being so as he’s cut the hell out of it and reshaped it, partly to fit, but mostly cos he wanted it to look right on his chop. I’m getting a little ahead of myself, though, so let’s take a step back to the bike’s beginning, shall we?

He’s been into older Harleys for a while now, and was running a very tidy Shovelhead which he’d bought as a crash-damaged project, and built up, and was actually part of The Trip Out’s Biker Build-Off. He was offered a (well, this) Pan motor, a 74-inch (1200cc) 1954 50th anniversary model, and just had to have it so, to fund the forthcoming build, he, regretfully, sold the Shovel.

It was, he says, a long process involving collecting some parts and making others, and one of the first things he did was take the motor up to the legendary Baz in Northampton (the engine builder all the guys who run these old bikes use) to have him go through it. He worked his magic over it, rebuilding the gearbox (and adding an extra tooth to the kicker so as to make it easier to start), and redoing the crank with S&S rods, oil pump, and crank itself. Nick then had it back, and fitted Drag Specialities barrels and pistons, a Morris magneto, an alternator that looks like a dynamo (charges the battery, but only does the lights), a BDL clutch and belt primary, and a homemade set of ’pipes with a pair of kicked-up cocktail shakers on the end. The clutch has a mousetrap to convert the original heel/toe-rocker foot-operated clutch to hand operation (Harley did this themselves on their early Big Twins before they later changed their gearboxes), and the primary cover has its outer covers left off for the look.

SPEC:
1956 74-inch (1200cc) Harley-Davidson Panhead engine (Drag Specialities barrels/pistons, Andrews B-grind cam, S&S Super E carb, aftermarket air-filter, S&S crank/rods/oil pump, BDL clutch/belt primary, rebuilt gearbox, extra tooth on kicker, Morris mag’, homemade exhausts), 1976 H-D FLH Shovel frame (modified, Panic Cycle axle plates), homemade forwards with mousetrap, Avon Speedmaster 21-inch front tyre, 21-inch star hub wheel (Timkin bearings), W&W springers, Flanders risers, one-off ’bars, Coke-bottle grips, Excelsior fuel tank (modified), Wassell rear mudguard (modified), homemade seat, H-D oil tank/battery box (modified), Royal Enfield ‘plate-holder (modified), homemade sissy-bar, 18-inch star hub rear wheel (Timkin bearings), H-D Ironhead drum brake (modified), Firestone 18-inch rear tyre, homemade loom, tractor headlight, aftermarket LED tail-light

FINISH:
Black & rust by the weather, occasional Solvol Autosol by owner

ENGINEERING:
Bike built at home by owner, motor built by Baz, frame hardtailed by Jay at Heron Cycles (ex-So Low Choppers)

THANKS TO:
“Baz; Jay; & Sumo…”

The frame it’s in is that of a 1976 FLH Shovel (like Elvis Presley had) which’s been converted from twin-shock to hardtail by Jay Ransome of Heron Cycles in the days when he was working with his dad, Clive (Hip) at So Low Choppers. Doing this has, of course, completely changed the bike from being a lardy-arsed barge to a skinny and minimal chopper, and it’s complemented by a set of W&W Cycles springers, a pair of star hub wheels (the rear with a modified Ironhead drum brake), a set of one-off ’bars by Sumo at Vintage Chop (**www.vintagechop.com**), held in a set of very cool Flanders-style risers (named after the company who made them, you know, not the region in Belgium), with Coke bottle grips. The aforementioned tank was bought at a Stockers Tea Party (a very exclusive vintage chopper event)*, the rear muddie’s a Wassell, attached by a homemade sissy-bar, with a homemade seat atop it, and a modified H-D oil tank below. The loom is, as you can imagine, minimal; the headlight’s off an old tractor (wonder if the farmer’s noticed it’s missing yet?); and the rear light’s a neat little LED ’un.

At this point, most people might well’ve started thinking about getting the bike painted in something suitably ’70s, but Nick wasn’t having any of that nonsense. No, the frame n’ forks may be a perfectly serviceable black, but the tank and the rear ’guard’re as scru… er, patina’d as… er, you know. And do you know what? I don’t think the bike’d be as cool any other way – it was definitely its ‘face? Bovvered?’ attitude that made me walk over for a closer look.

Nick definitely doesn’t really care what people might or might not think – he just gets on and rides it. “It’s a bit of a twat to start sometimes, but it’s good to ride… and the brakes’re crap, but that just makes 60mph that much more fun, doesn’t it?”

NIK

*and, rather terrifyingly, has the look of the Gerald Scarfe teacher monster from ‘The Wall’

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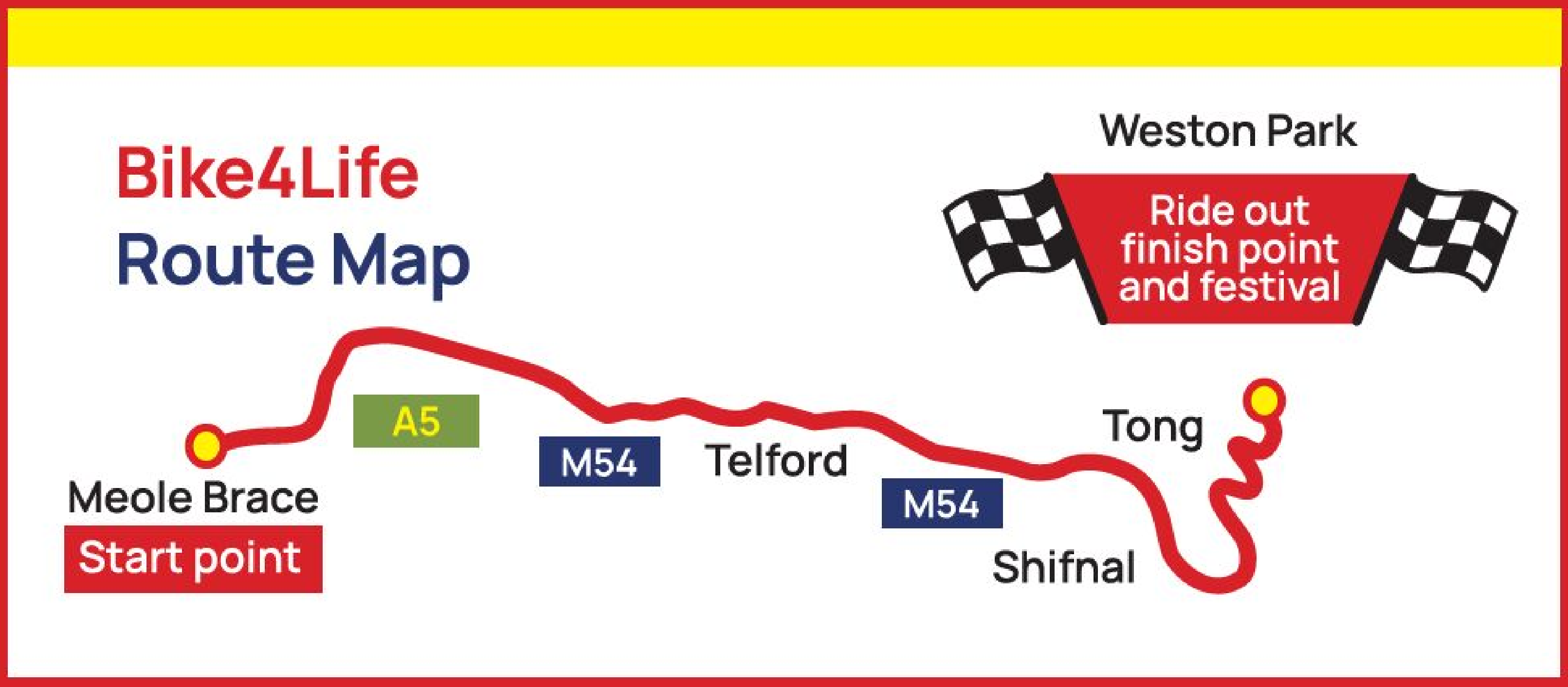
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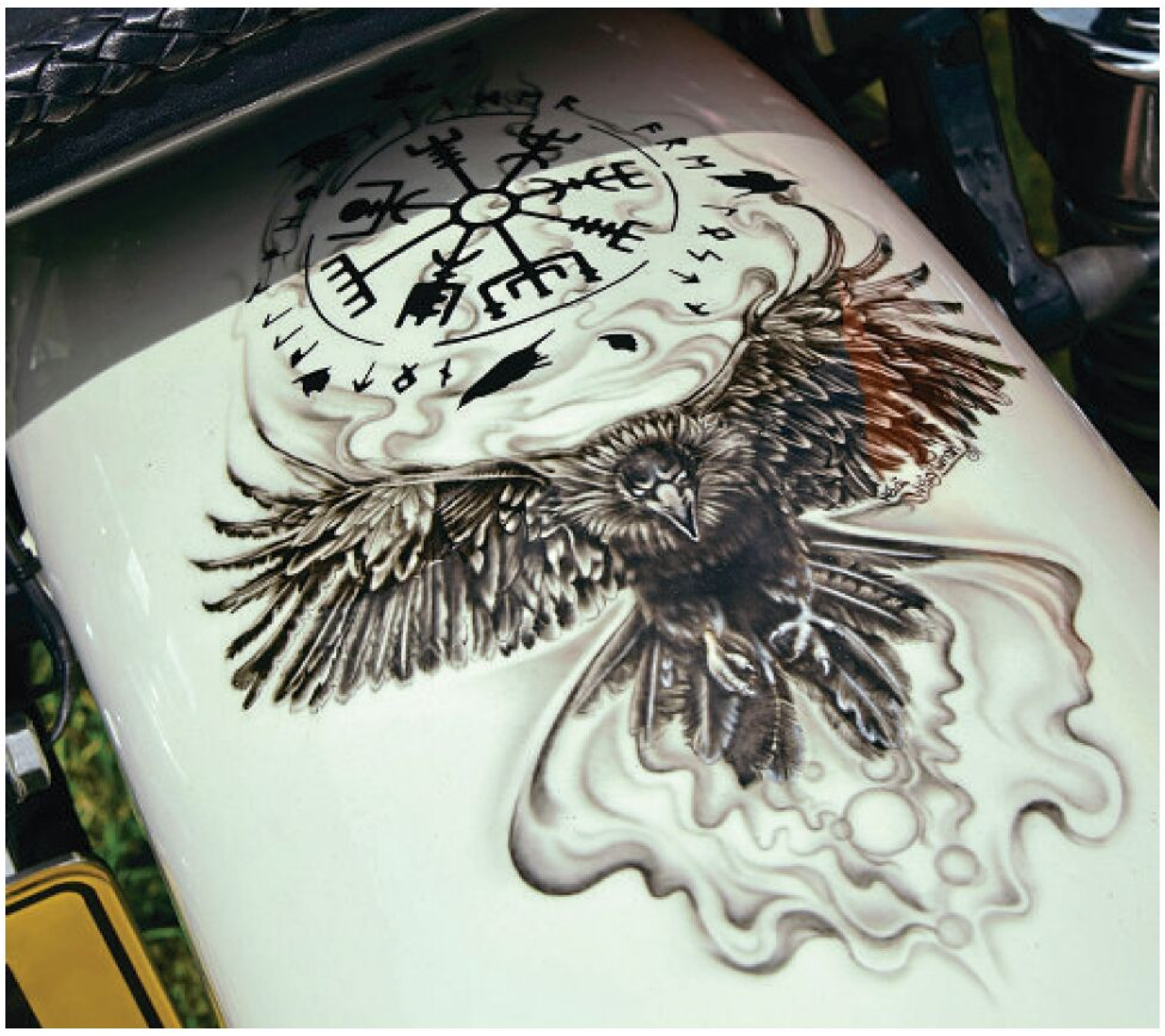

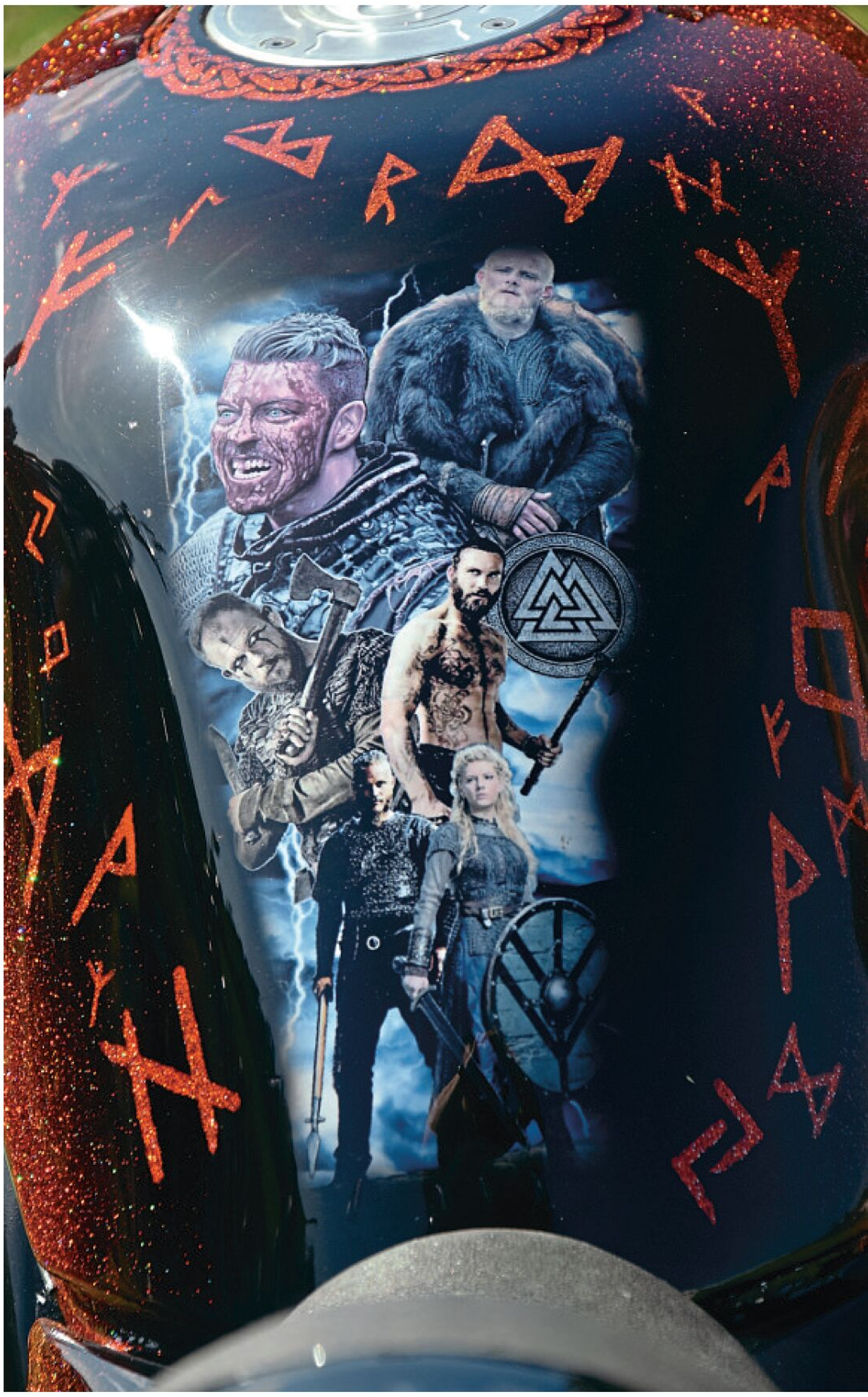

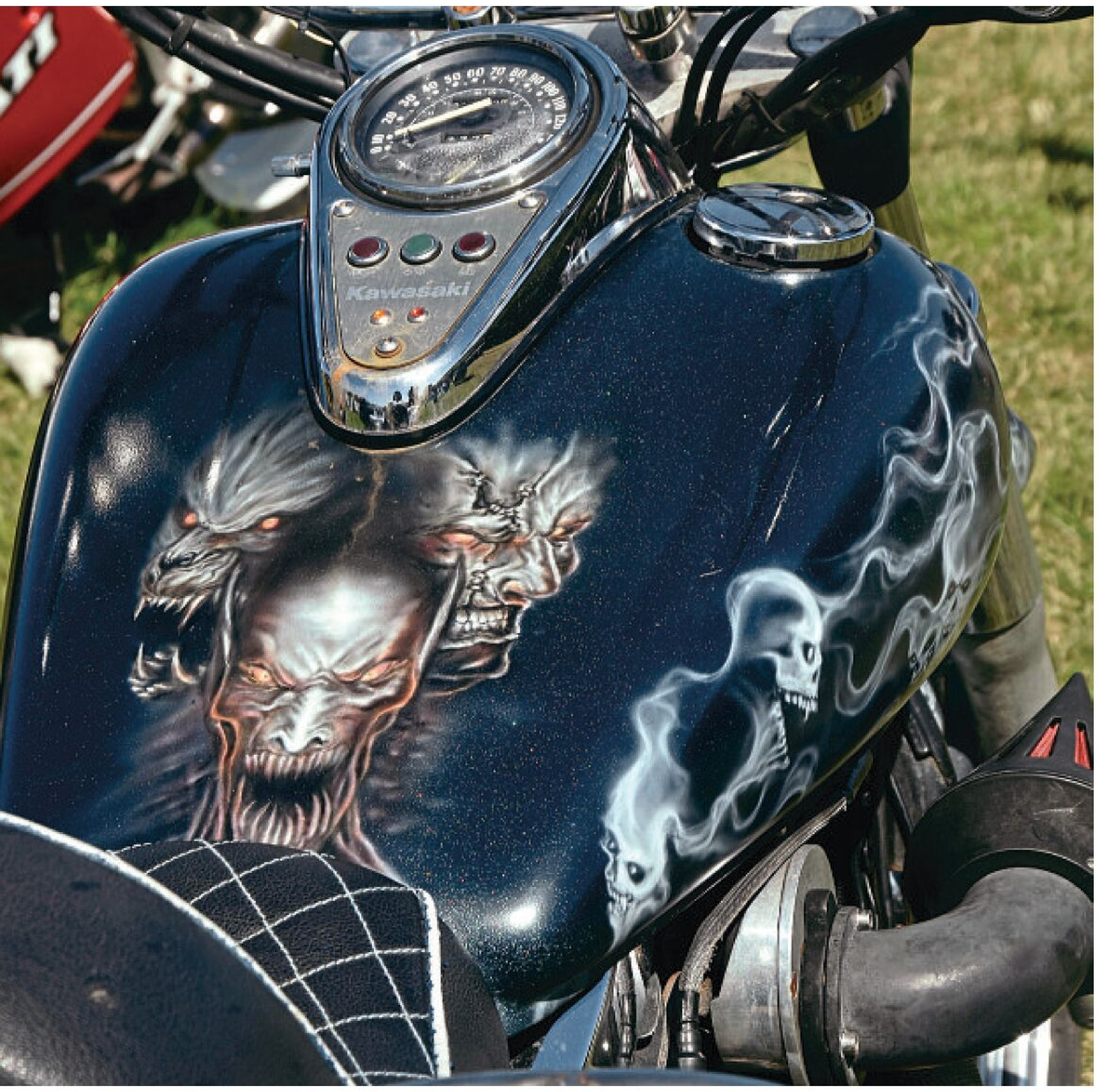
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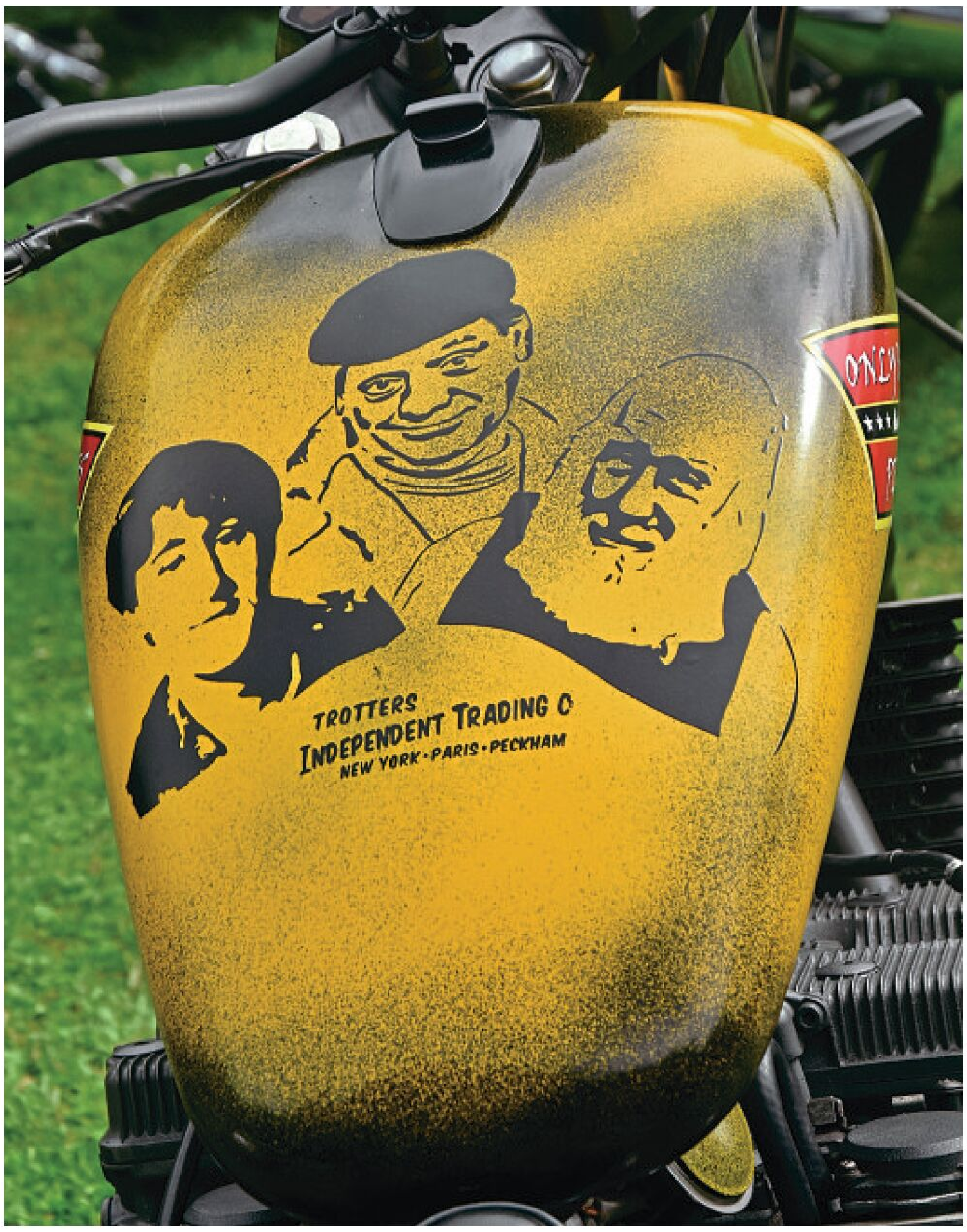
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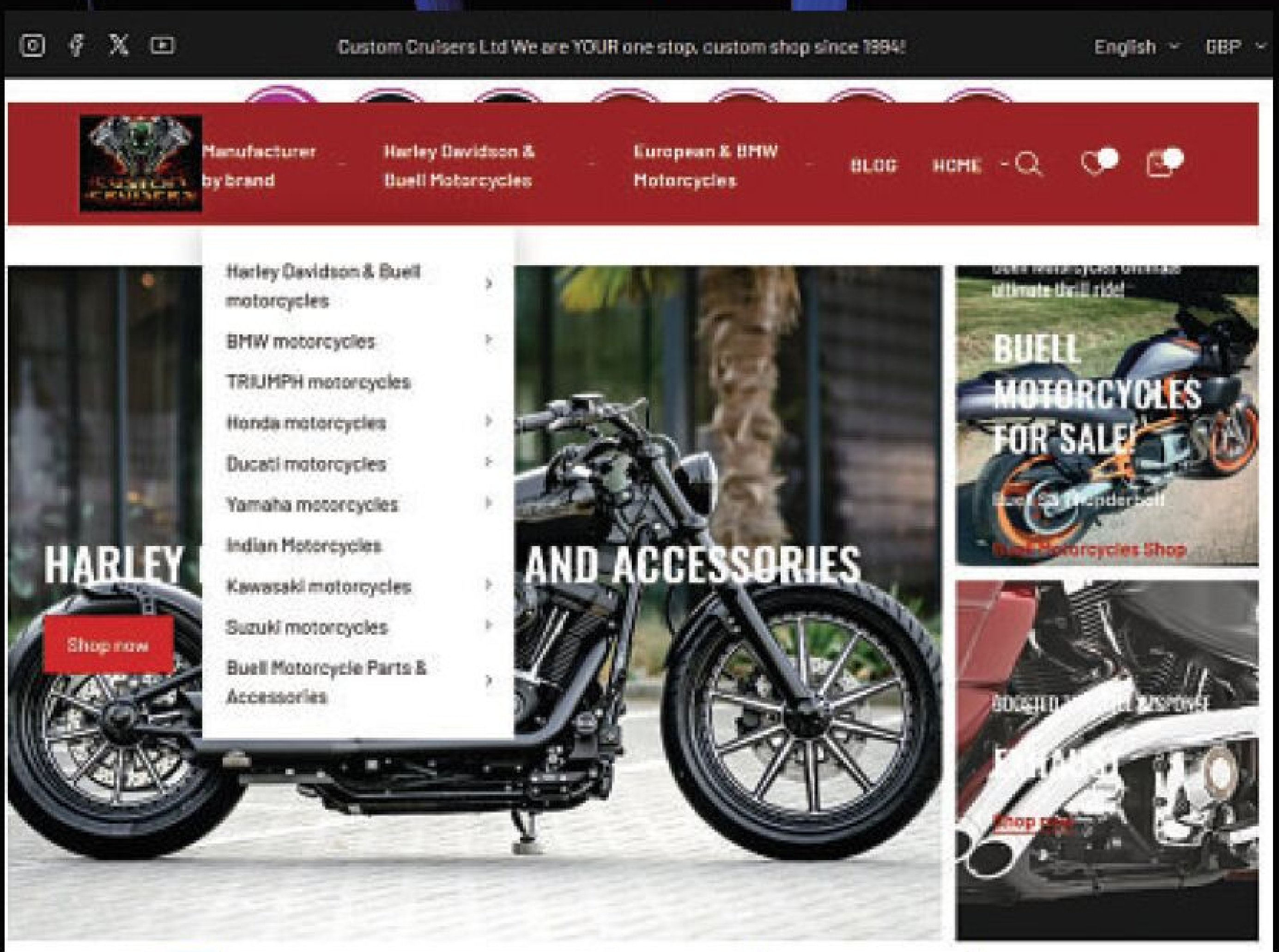
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REAL WORLD
ROADTEST

A BIT OF A DIFFERENT ROAD-TEST THIS ISSUE 'COS THE BIKE YOU SEE HERE IN FRONT OF YOU ISN'T AN OFF-THE-SHELF* BIKE YOU CAN BUY FROM ANY DEALER – IT'S A MODIFIED VERSION OF THE NEW BSA GOLD STAR, BUT YOU CAN HAVE ONE JUST LIKE IT AS THEY'LL MODIFY YOUR BIKE TO LOOK SIMILAR.

LEGACY MOTORCYCLES' BSA GOLD STAR SCRAMBLER

The gentlemen who built it are the father and son team, Allan and Owen, of Legacy Motorcycles in Birmingham – the guys who built the absolutely beautiful gold Triumph chop that won Best Custom (overall) in the 2024 BSH Custom Champs. While I was there photographing that, they showed me the Beesa, based on a year-old (then) 650 Gold Star, and allowed me a quick spin aboard it to get a feel for what they think may well be the world's first custom (modern) Goldie.

The idea behind it, y'see, was to build a tribute/replica of the legendary Gold Star Catalinas of the late 1950s. "The wot?" you may be wondering. In 1956, a guy named Chuck Minert (yes, he was American, why do you ask?) won the Catalina Grand Prix, a popular 100-mile off-road race on the island of Santa Catalina off the coast of Los Angeles, on a modified DBD34 Gold Star. More than 1,000 bikes started the race, but he beat them all and, because of this, the US west coast BSA distributor, Hap Alzina, persuaded the factory back in England to produce a replica named after the race. The Gold Star Catalina was manufactured from 1959 to 1963, although not that many of them, and they are, as you can imagine, a rare beast today.

The Legacy lads had the idea of building their replica to race at the Malle Mile Beach Race at Margate Sands, described as an 'inappropriate

*It'd have to be a bloody big shelf, for a start.

motorcycle beach race weekend', and finished it in time to enter the event on 13-14 May 2023. There're no actual winners as such, it's more a light-hearted thing, and they competed and survived, giving a good account of themselves and proving the new Gold Star in a competition event. Since then it's done a couple of other inappropriate motorcycle race events, but mostly has an easy life at their base in Brum.

To create it, they first stripped the Goldie they had of all the heavy superfluous bits (mudguards, catalytic converter, exhaust, stock indicators an' such), and replaced 'em all with new, much lighter alloy parts of their own design. The front mudguard, for example, is now one of their own smaller and lighter (and much more classic-looking) alloy items, with their own brackets, and the forks wear heavy-duty rubber gaiters and new lighter and smaller headlamp brackets, and the stock 'bars've been replaced with more period-correct chrome braced trials 'bars. At the rear, they removed the stock BSA subframe, and made a new smaller and lighter one (you'll read those words, smaller and lighter, a lot this article, I suspect), and added a new alloy rear muddie, again much more off-roady looking than the stock 'un (and braced with some original, old, BSA chrome stays), replaced the stock shocks with high spec' (and more classic-looking) Hagons, and made their own new mudguard bracket that takes both the 'plate, and a new smaller LED rear light and tiny LED indicators. Both wheels were fitted with Bridgestone AX41 knobbly tyres, and they made a classic-style custom chainguard, too.

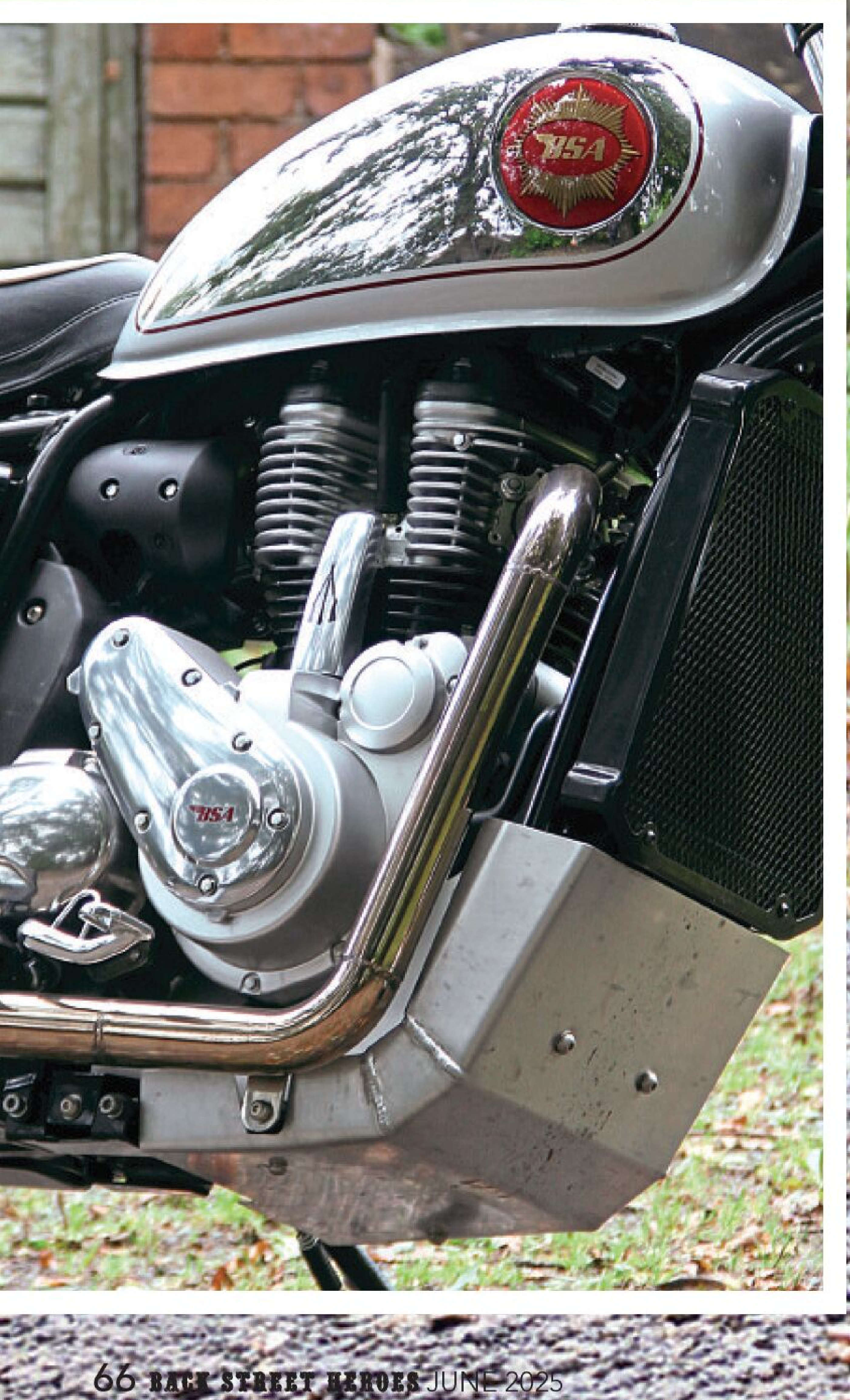
Moving to the engine, they helped it breathe better by removing the stock exhaust and its catalytic converter (the joys of modern emissions regulations, eh?) and making a new 'un from inch-n'-five-eighths stainless 'pipe (with a removable baffle), and made new lower engine plates that cover any gaps where the cat'd been, polished the sprocket cover, and painted the head and timing case, before making a suitably chunky off-roadee-stylee bash plate (again, from alloy for lightness). That just left them needing a seat, so they made a single competition-style that, covered black, looks just right.

That was it, it was done – it sounds simple enough, but took a lot of time and thought to get looking just so.

The question is, what does it ride like? The answer is… rorty! It feels taller than a stock Gold Star, probably 'cos o' the taller tyres, but not too much, and the trials 'bars just feel right as you climb aboard. Thumb the starter, and you get a lovely deep bark from the exhaust, along with a glorious twitter on the over-run, and the freer-flowing pipe gives the engine a bit more pep. It sounds, and feels, right, and the little seat's firm but, again, feels right. The whole bike's transformed, if you like, from perfectly adequate, but staid, road bike to something with a little more attitude, a little more presence. People turn to see what the noise is as you come up behind 'cos it sounds like a competition-spec big single, and nod and smile as you pass – it's that kind of bike.

And the cost to you of getting a bike like this? Well, assuming you already have a Goldie, and preferably a Legacy Edition one but they can work with other models, too, then the cost, all in, is £2,950 unless, of course, you want yours personalised a little more in which case you should contact them to discuss your requirements. If you have a Legacy Edition, then the timescale required is just three to four weeks, sometimes less, while other models, or special requirements, may take a little longer. Alternatively, you could buy this very bike from them for just £7,950.

NIK



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The Future Bike nearing completion

A YEAR OF CUSTOM BIKING...

PART FIVE

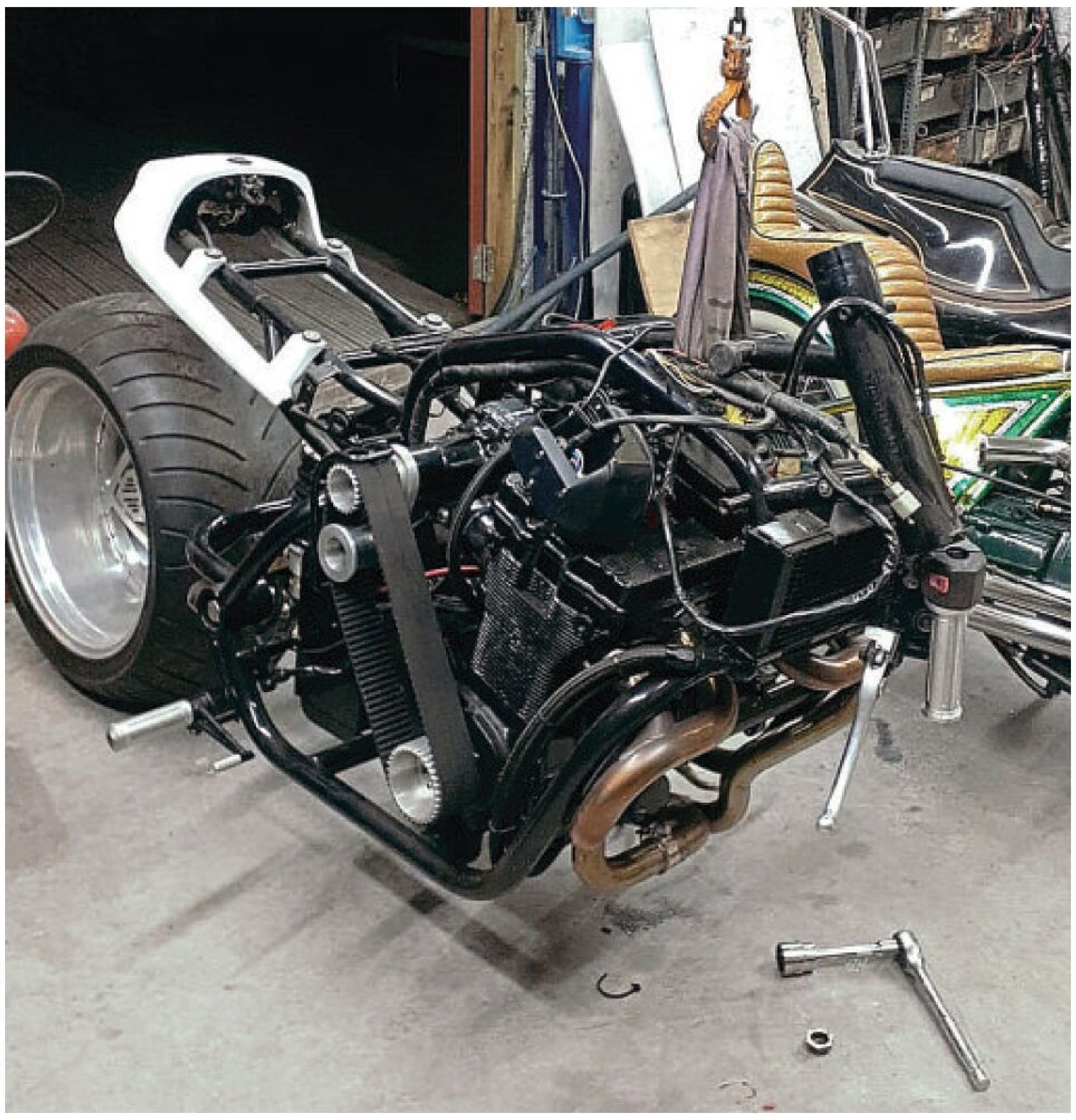
The Hornet at Café 33 near Highpoint Prison on a sunny day

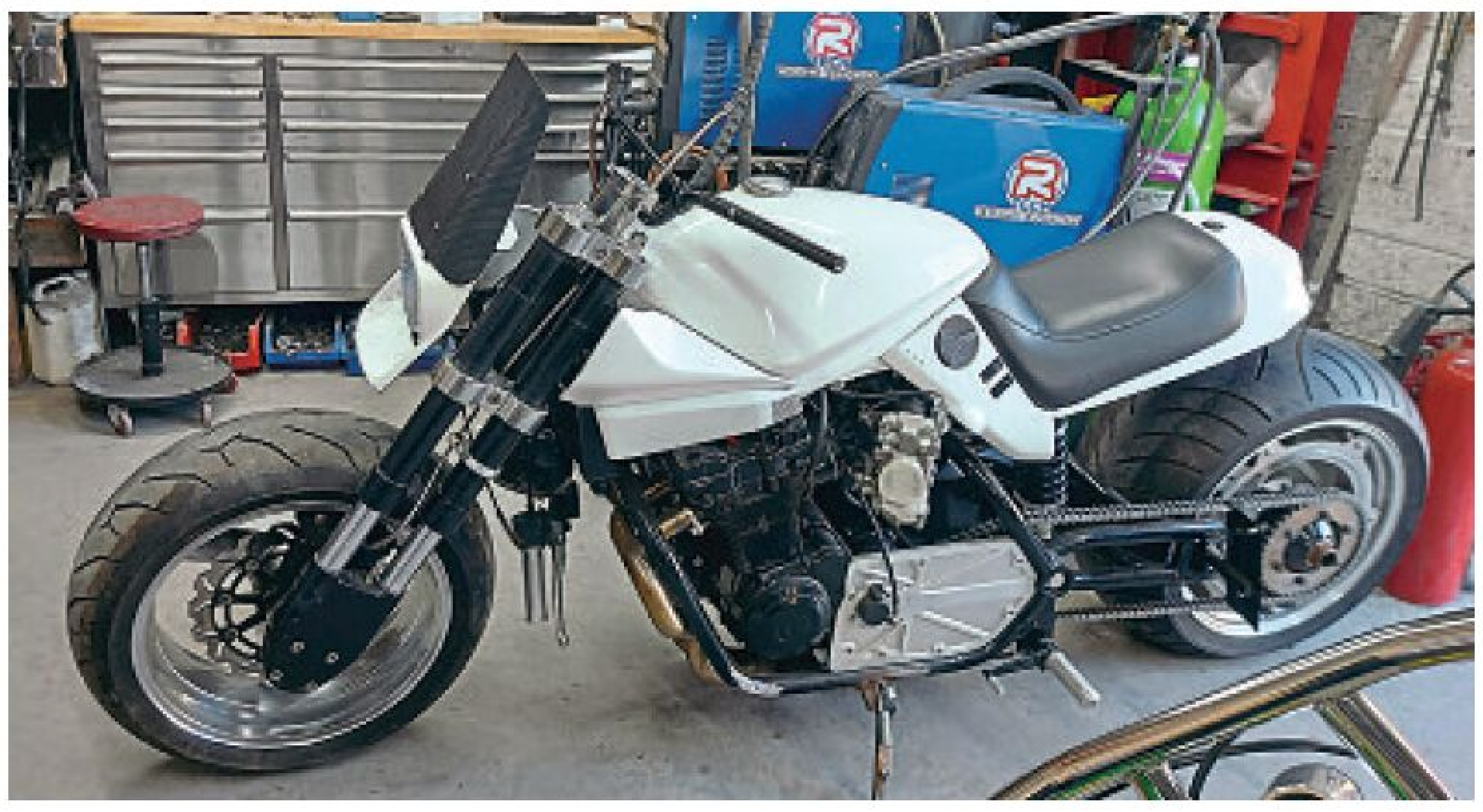
LAST ISSUE I WAS TALKING ABOUT THE FRONT END FROM THE BANDIT BEING PUT ON THE LONG-STALLED KATANA PROJECT, AND THINGS'VE MOVED ON APACE IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS.

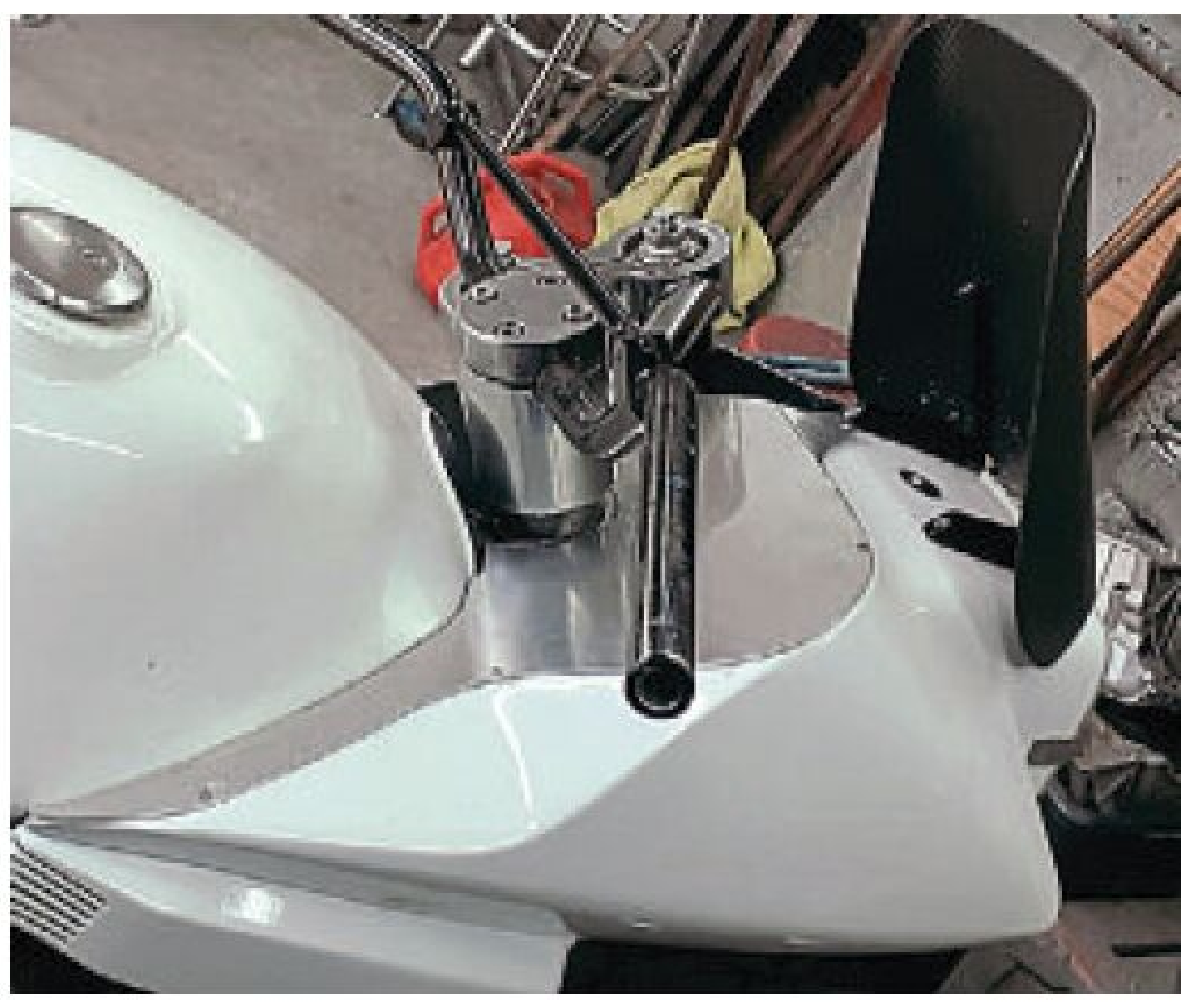
Before that, though, a word on the others in the fleet. TFB (The Future Bike) is still at Paradise Garage in Downham Market, just waiting for a few more bits; the Bandit chop went for, and passed, its MoT; the Hornet continues to start, run, n' stop flawlessly; and the Spondon?... well, herein lies a tale.

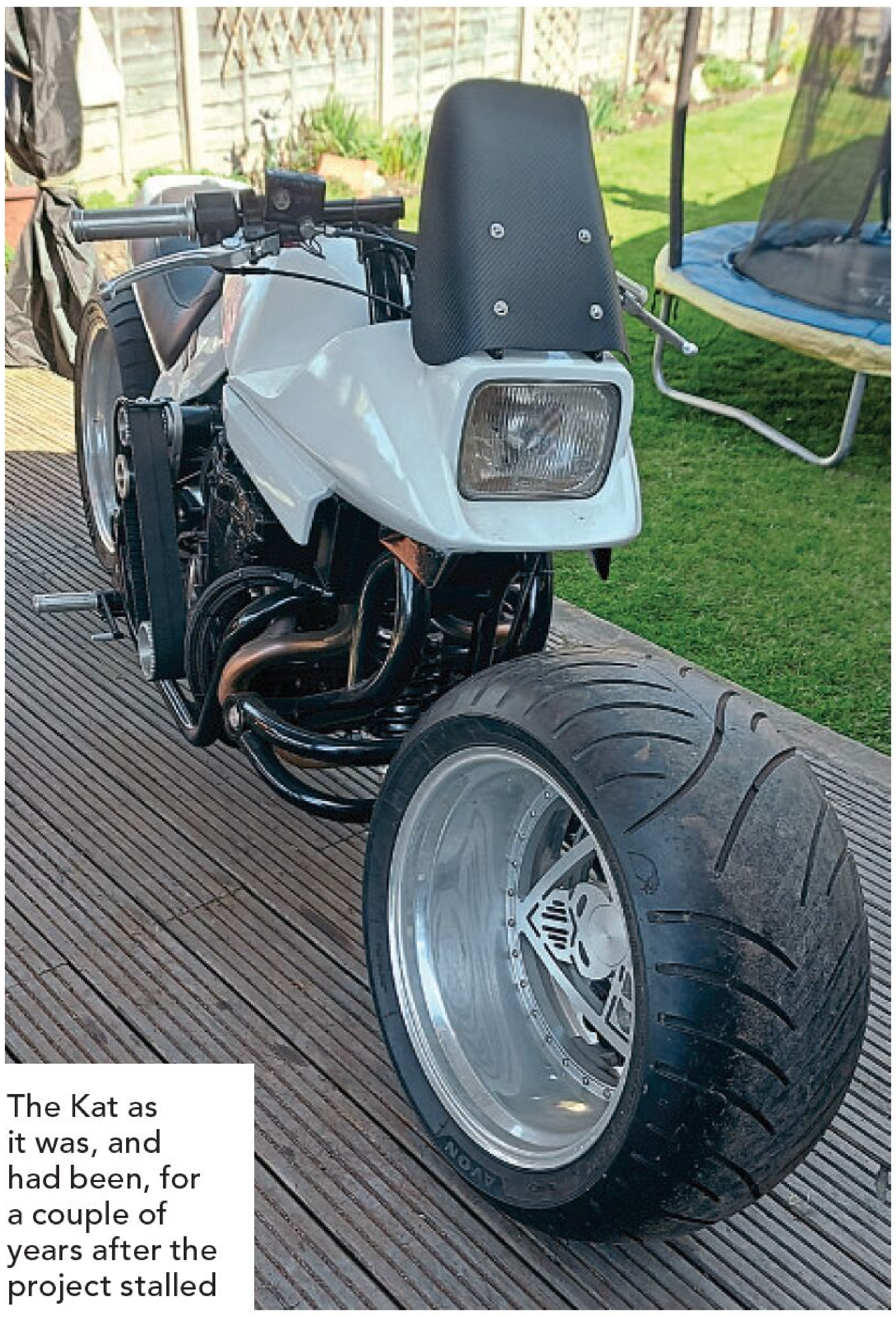
The frame of the beast has always been an unknown quality – given that it was originally built for a CB1000 motor way back when, drawing on my extensive knowledge (ahem) of streetfighter frame builders from the '90s, I had kind o' narrowed it down to, perhaps, a Polygon (as in Polygon/PEST from Gloucester), having eliminated Streetfighters UK, Boss Hogg, and a few

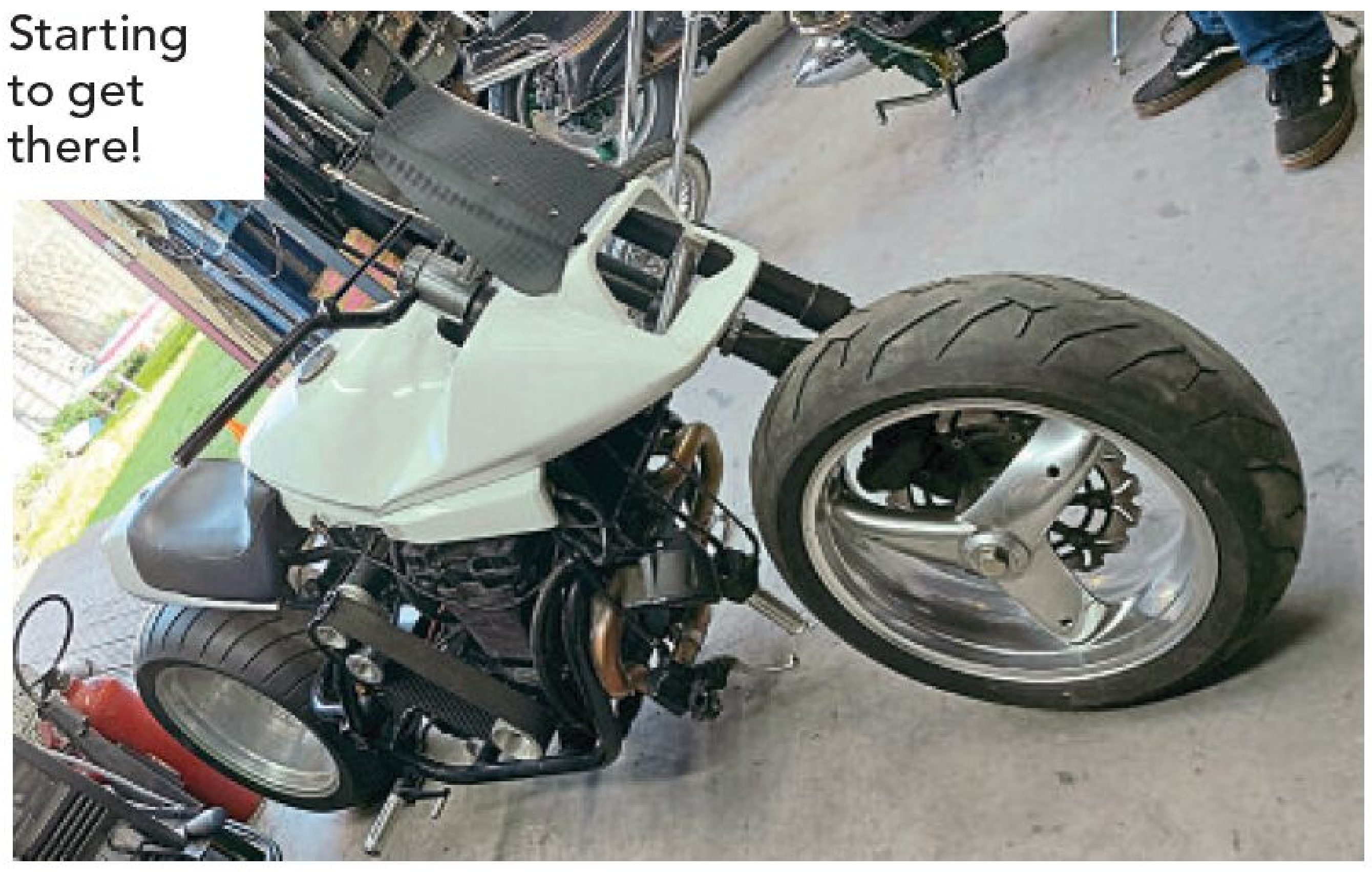
The Bandit chop getting its MoT – it passed with flying colours, of course


RIGHT: Front end out…


BELOW: … and, quite some surgery later, the single-sider off the Bandit in


BELOW: Fairing infill panel/strengthening bracket – still needs to cut out for the clocks to go back on


The Kat as it was, and had been, for a couple of years after the project stalled


Starting to get there!

New minimalist exhausts

others, too, but then I was put in touch with one of the Polygon lads who said it wasn't one of theirs – back to square one. Then, at Worship in Leeds last year, I got talking to a guy with a very trick Spondon who has a number of the older Spondon jigs from back in the day, and he reckons the rear section could easily have come off one of them (the front of it's been modified at some point, probably to enable the fitting of the R1 front end, and there're some markings on the headstock under the powder-coat that may or may not've been Spondon stampings, but they've been cut through and aren't really readable). That idea suffered a setback when one of the Spondon cognoscenti pointed out that the welding on the frame wasn't up to Spondon's usual flawless standard, but then Shaun over in Downham, who used to build SOS (Sound of Singles) racers using a variety of frames from aftermarket suppliers, said that out of every ten Spondon frames they bought, six or seven would, indeed, have Spondon's perfect standards, but three or four'd just have 'normal' welding, so… seeing as the tank (which definitely isn't a Spondon item) and seat'd just been repainted black and looked a bit bare, I asked Tom at Havoc Paint to do me a couple of Spondon Engineering logo stickers with a question mark at the end, and the tank now proudly bears them. I hadn't expected the internet furore that followed me posting a pic of the bike, but the Spondonerati completely lost their sh*t – always good for a chuckle on a grey and rainy day.

Anyway, on to the Katana. Started, as a project, more years ago than I can remember, it's kind o' stalled for the last few years as I've had to get various people to sort out various bits that weren't terribly well done. The biggest hurdle, though, has been the fact that the steering geometry was terribly, horribly wrong, and the front end was almost impossible to turn, and tried to steer the wrong way. It'd sat in my garage with a sheet over it for ages, until I spoke to Gary Sanders about swapping the single-sided leading link set up for the single/twin forks off the Bandit. He reckoned it wouldn't be too big a gig, and soon had the front end out, the over-length headstock cut down, the steering head spindle extended, and new forks in. The oh-so-recognisable Katana fairing had to be cut to allow them to turn, and modified internally, too, for clearance, but now the steering's actually turnable – finally! There're still some clearance issues to be sorted (the oil cooler needs to move to the right an inch, and the tank needs modifying at the front, too), and the fairing infill panel/strengthening bracket that's been made to brace the newly-cut fairing also needs a little work, and the clocks need to go back on, but it's definitely getting there, and I can't bloody wait!

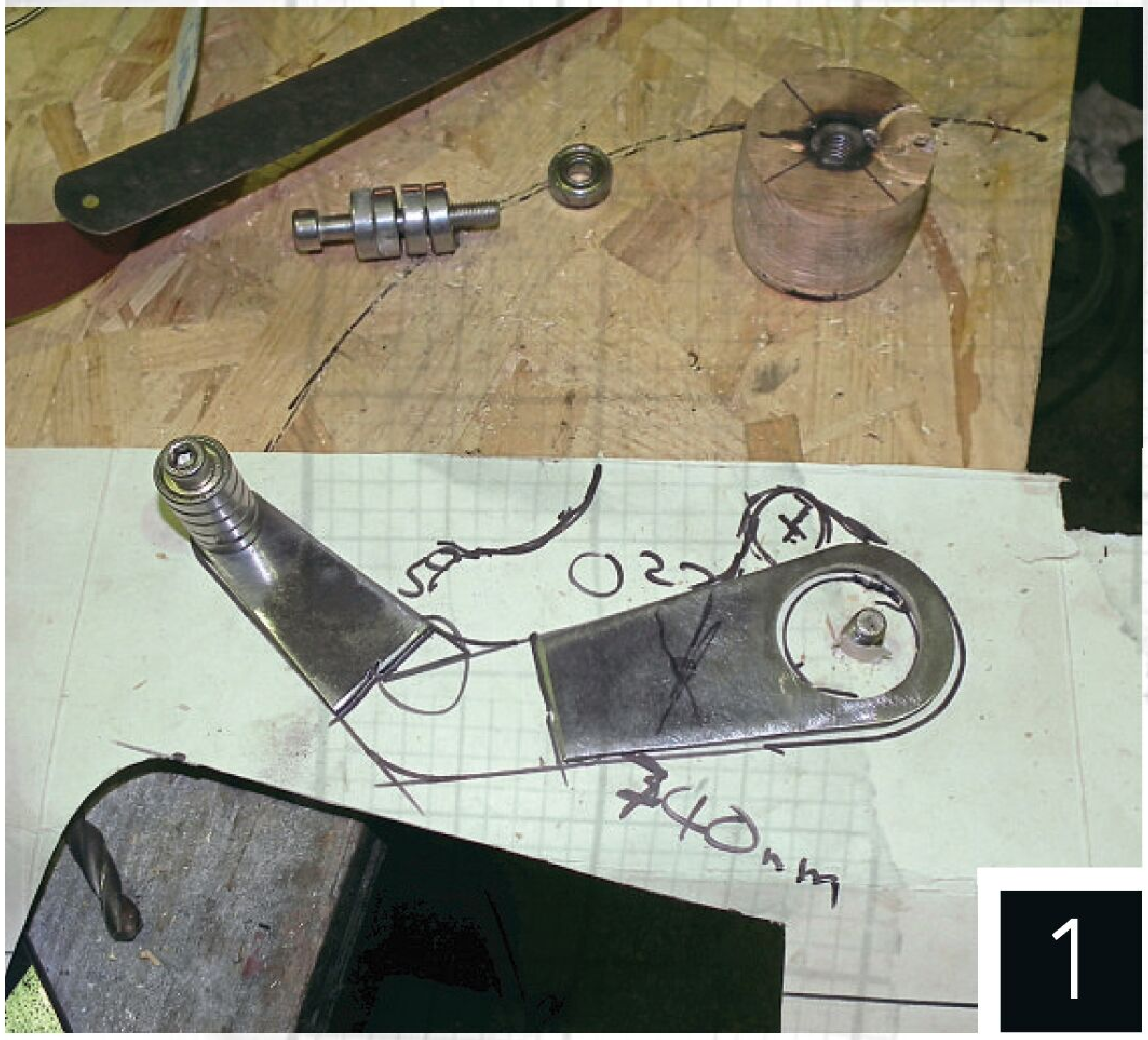
NIK

TECH

Mr Bridges' Motorcycle Diaries

VOL. VIII, EPISODE V

LAST TIME I ABANDONED THE TUBE POLISHER BUILD AT THE POINT WHERE I HAD THREE ROLLERS, ONE POORLY DESIGNED ARM, AND SOME STUFF BOLTED TO A PIECE OF STIRLING BOARD (FIG.1).



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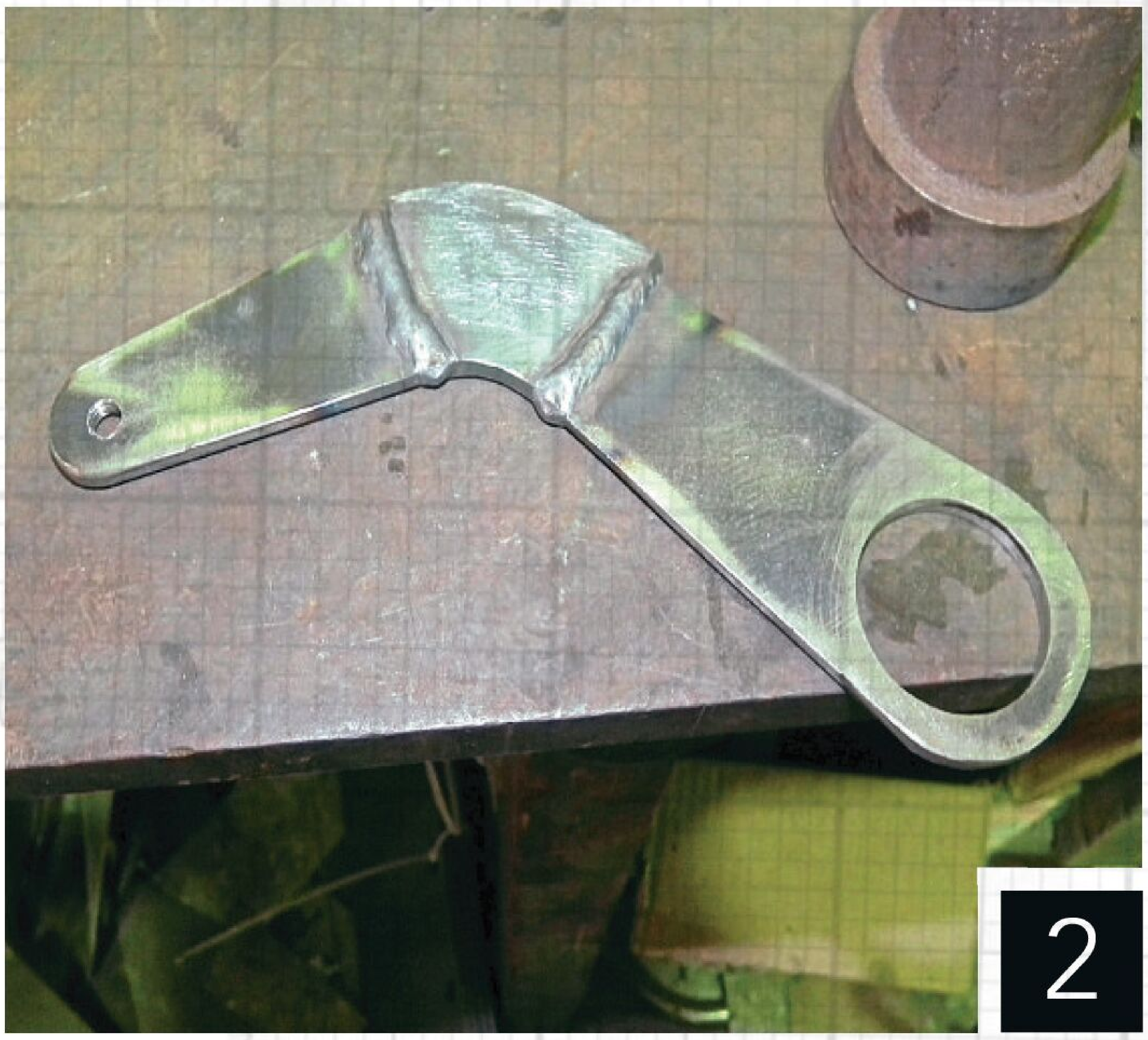

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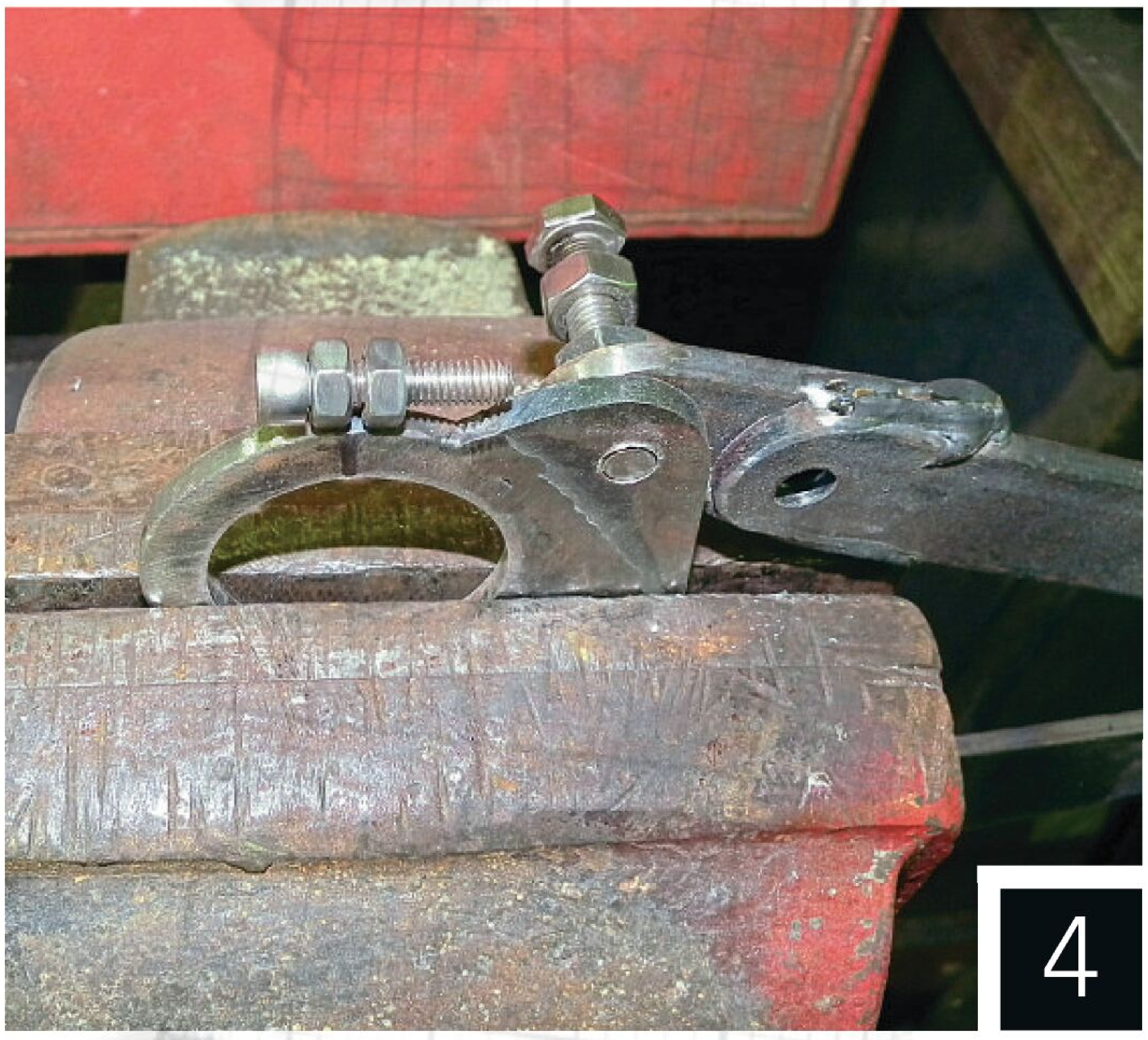

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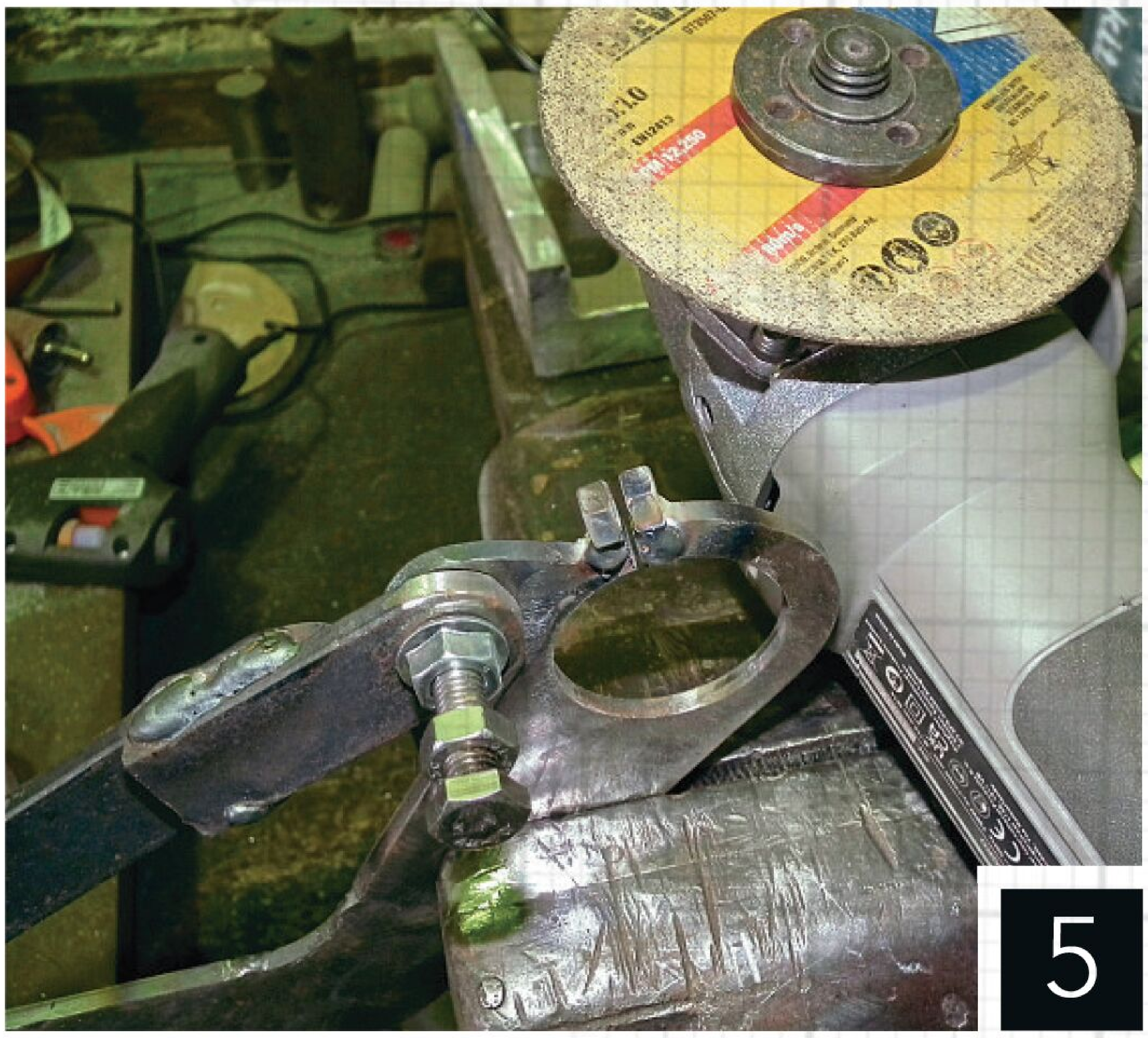

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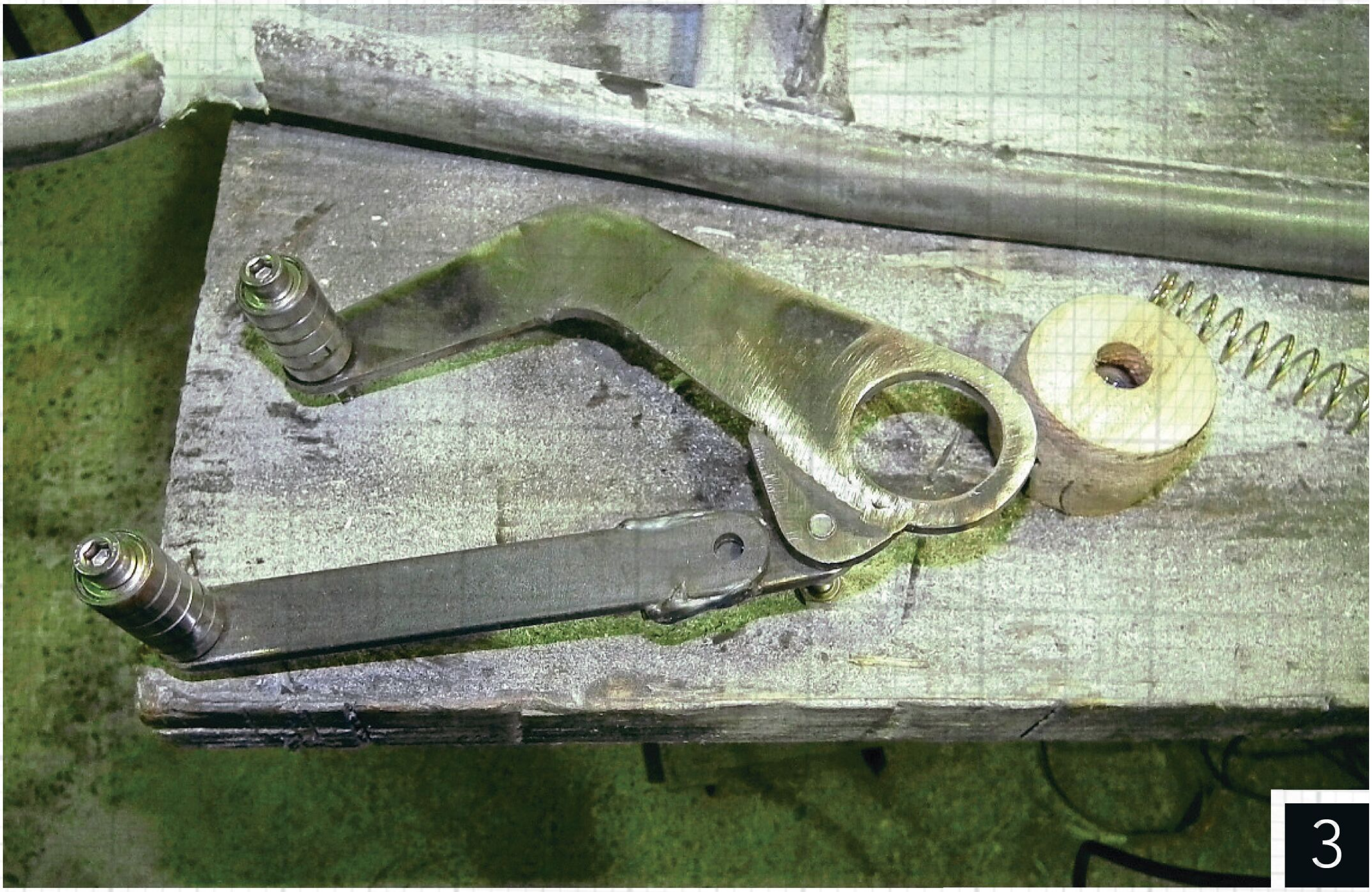
With the rollers arranged on the Stirling board, I was able to work out what went where and then work out how to connect them. As I mentioned previously, I wasn't in the mood to make a second large hole to fit the angle grinder, so I reused the arm I'd made. This was going to need somewhere for the handle to screw in, and a pivot point for the other arm. With that worked out, I cut out two further pieces of 5mm plate to make the required adjustments to the main arm, and welded it all together (Fig.2).

The secondary arm was then a simple case of cutting two pieces of 25x5mm steel strap and welding them together to get the required 180mm hole centres, and to offset the pivot point to keep the rollers in line (Fig.3), and the pivot point on the main arm was drilled and tapped to 8mm to accept a short section of 8mm threaded rod to act as the pivot for the secondary arm. I used an 8mm nut with a flange and a second plain nut to lock them together, and set them to allow free movement of the secondary arm with the minimum amount of wobble (Fig.4). At this point the tube polisher can be right- or left-handed so after I'd made my mind up about that, I welded the 8mm stud in place to prevent it coming loose. After a search for a couple of 6mm nuts that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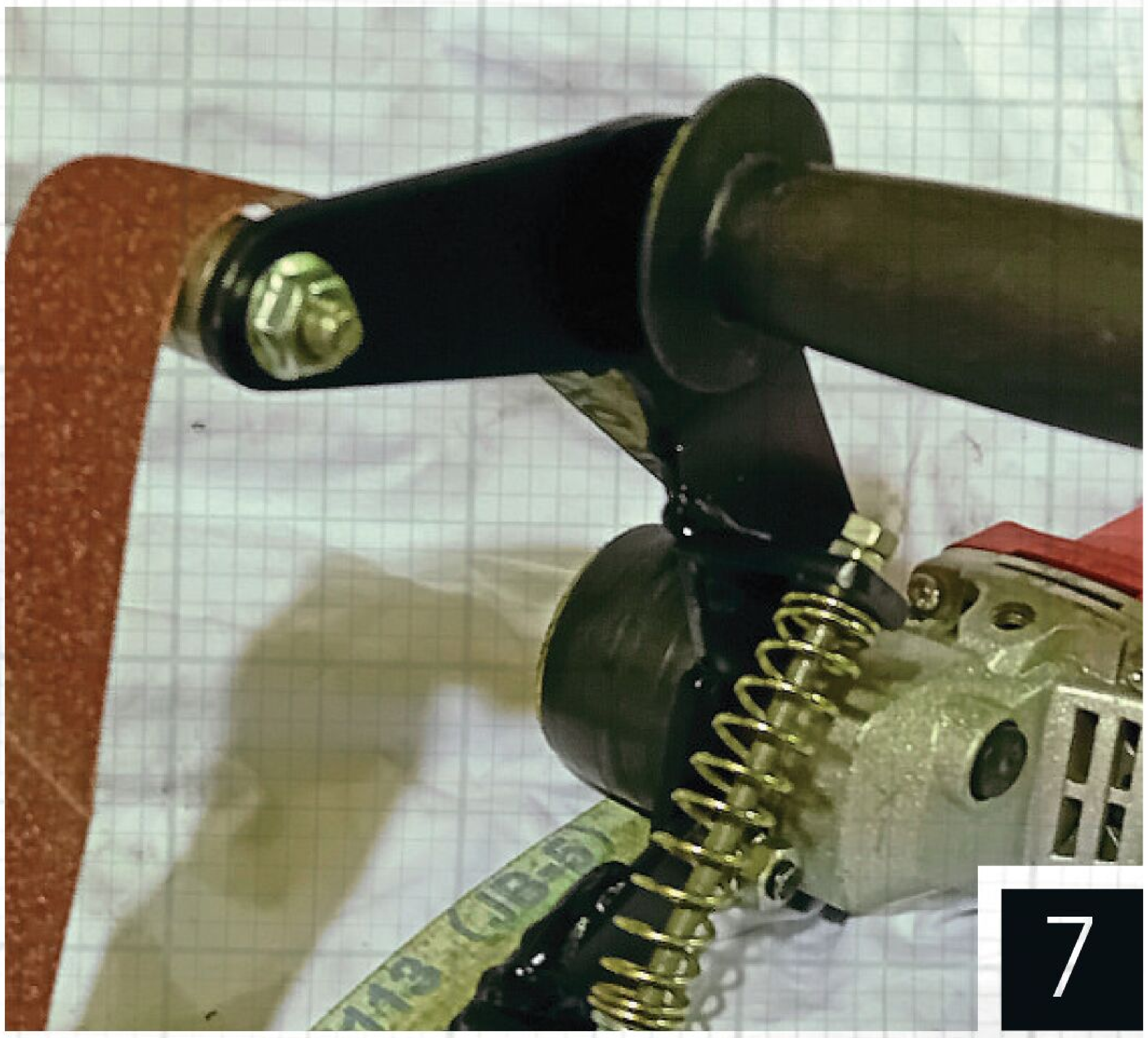

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weren't stainless, I positioned them on the edge of the 5mm main arm spaced apart by the thickness of a cutting disc (Fig.4). With those welded to the main arm, I cut between them with the cutting disc, and drilled the thread out of the one furthest from the pivot to allow a screw to pinch the arm firmly to the grinder (Fig.5). The holes on the far ends of both arms were tapped M8, and a suitable Allen bolt used to secure the stack of 608 ZZ bearings I was using as rollers, along with a washer to keep the outer face of the lower bearing clear of the arm it was screwed to (Fig6), and another hole was drilled and tapped to allow the handle that came with the grinder to attach to the main arm (Fig.7). At this point everything was assembled to check for ease of use mainly, but also that the pivoting arm cleared everything else. Once I was happy with which way round I wanted it to go, I welded the pivot stud in place.

The tricky part of all this is really the spring. I have a box of assorted compression springs that I seem to remember costing around a tenner (Fig.8), but I have no idea where I got them from. What I used was a 100mm long, 18mm diameter spring from the box. A quick Google and it turns out that you can buy what look like suitable springs of the same size at around a fiver for four of them on Amazon, or what looks like a similar selection to what I have for around

£12. You could bolt a hook to the handle attachment point on the grinder, and add a hook to the pivoting arm, and use an extension spring or possibly some rubber bands to tension the arms or a hairpin spring on the actual pivot for the arm. Since I had a compression spring, it had to go between the main arm and the pivoting one. To achieve that I made a couple of tags from the 25x5mm strap, and drilled a 10mm hole in them to allow a piece of 6mm threaded rod to pass through at an angle. The positioning was worked out by trying to keep the tags equidistant from the pivot, with the angle relative to the threaded rod varying by around the same amount from perpendicular with the belt taught, and

10mm
19
Samsung Galaxy A14

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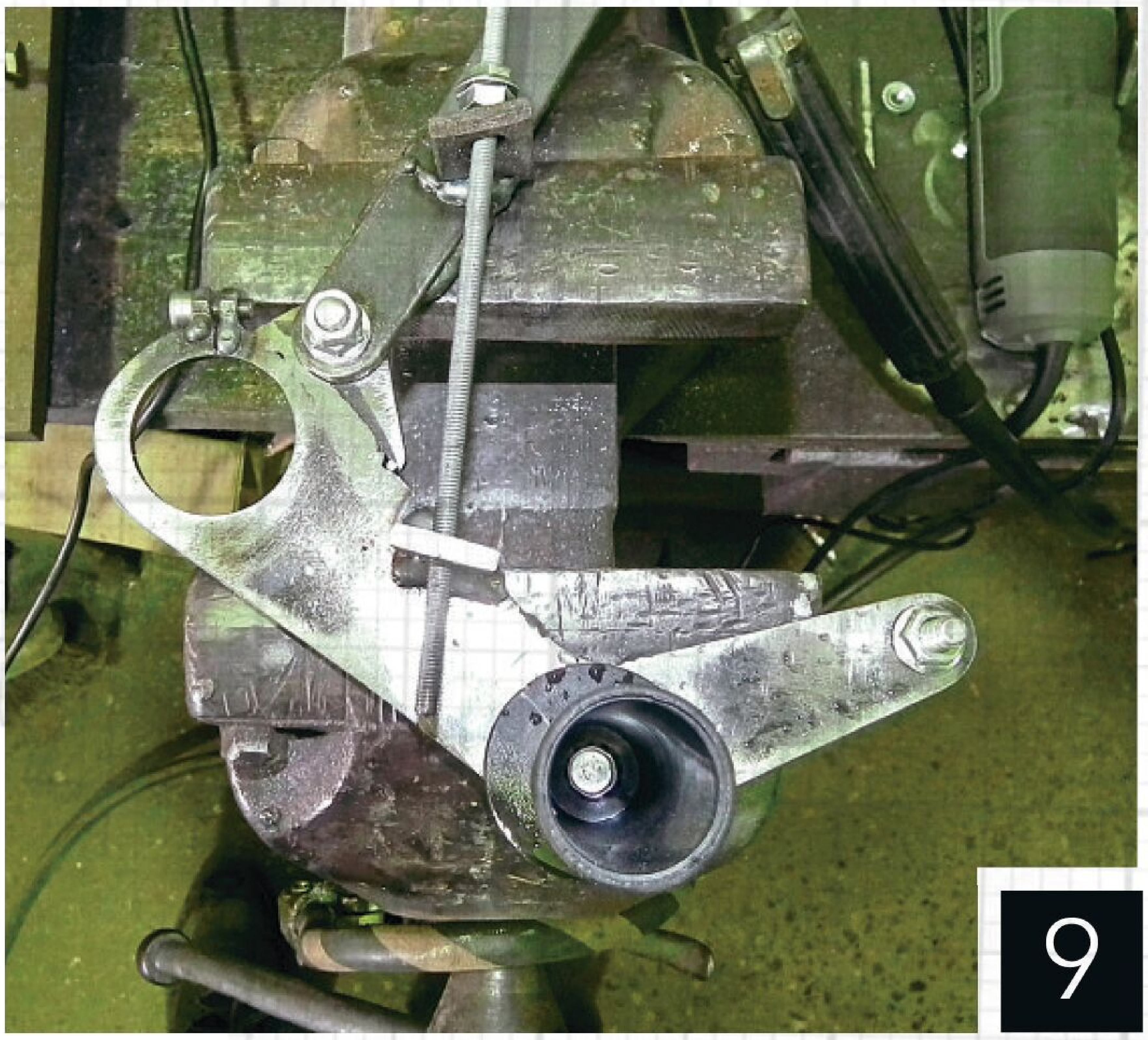

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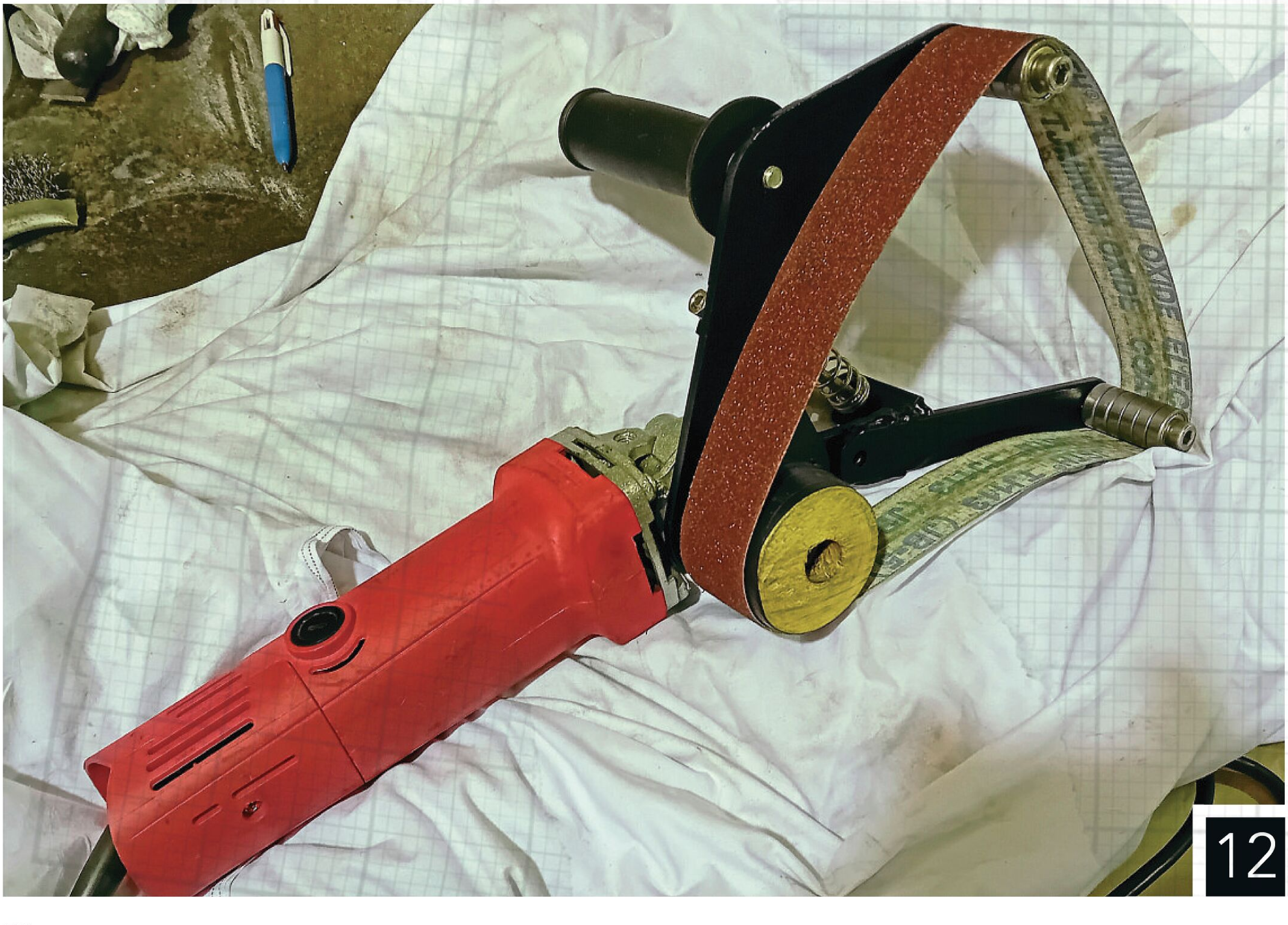

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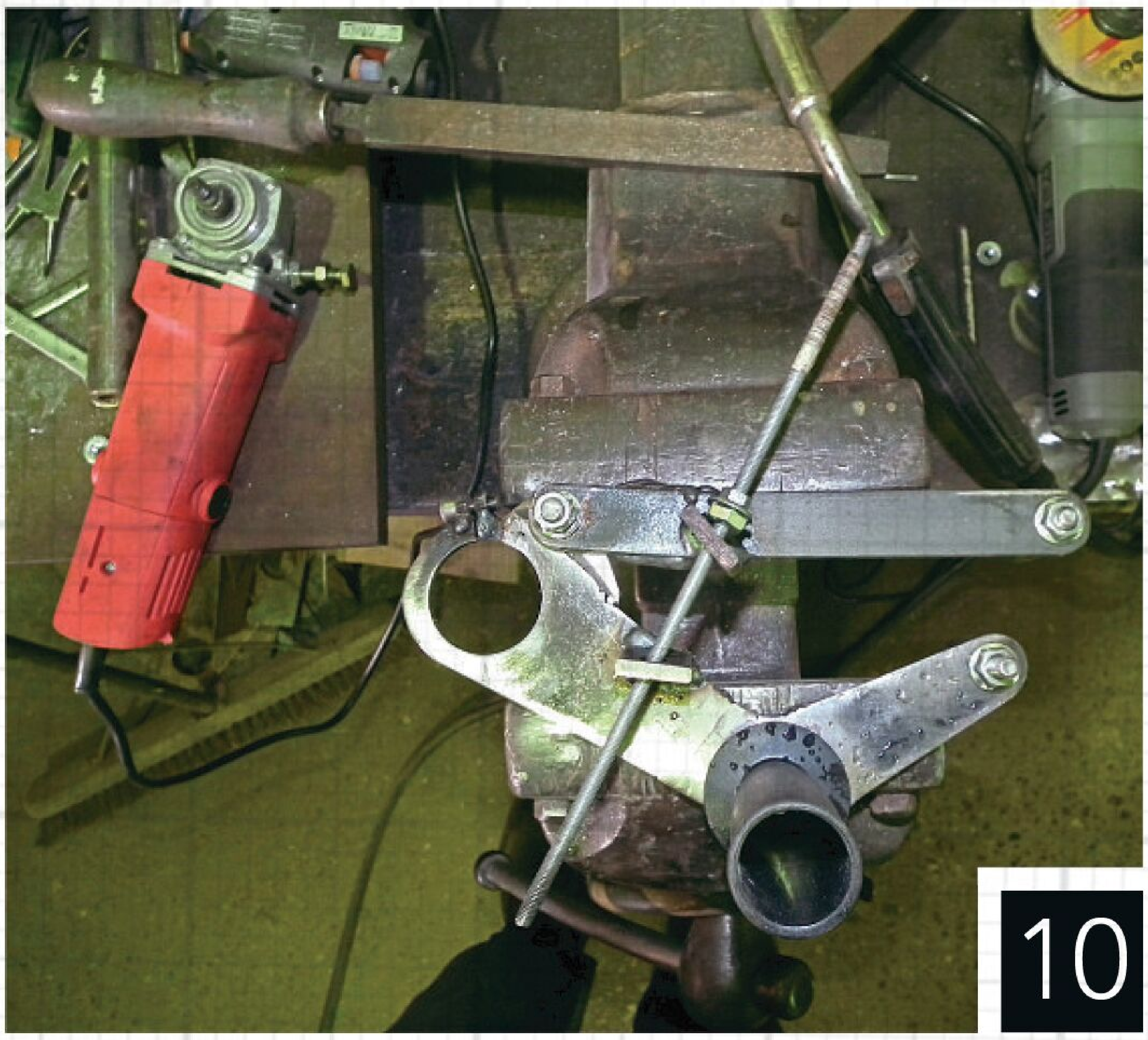
with everything squeezed up. As you can see in Figs 9 and 10, I didn't quite manage that, but it seemed to work. The 6mm threaded rod keeps the spring in place, and another 8mm flange nut with the thread drilled out allows for a bit of adjustment in the spring preload (Fig.11) The wooden drive wheel worked, but it worked a lot better once I'd wrapped it in a layer of insulating tape. It could do with having more of a barrel shape or some shoulders on it, which could be done by cutting out a thicker piece of wood and using a rasp to create a 'cotton reel' shape, or by cutting the shoulders from some other material and screwing or gluing them on, and I think the smaller rollers ended up with six bearings each, not five.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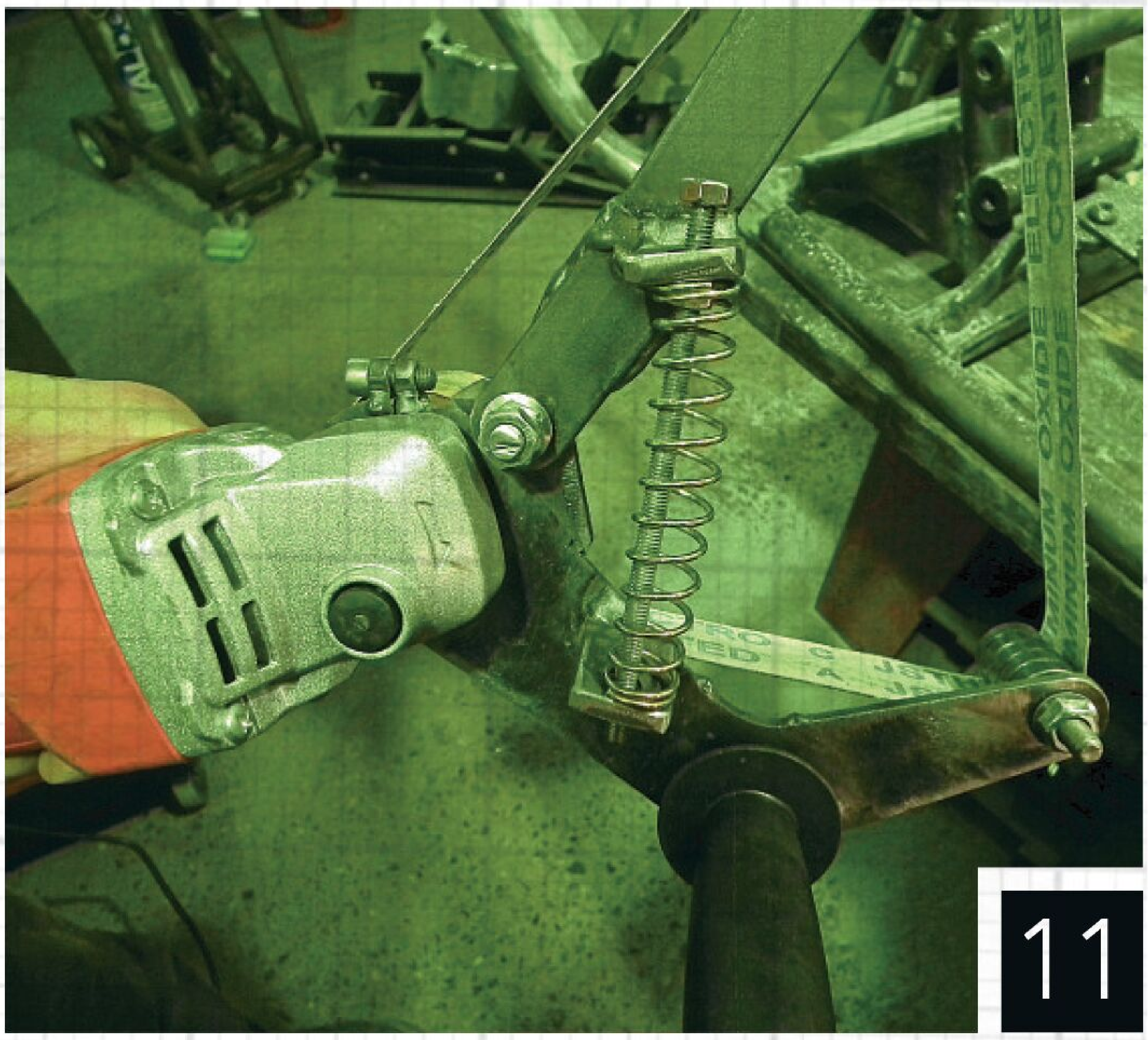
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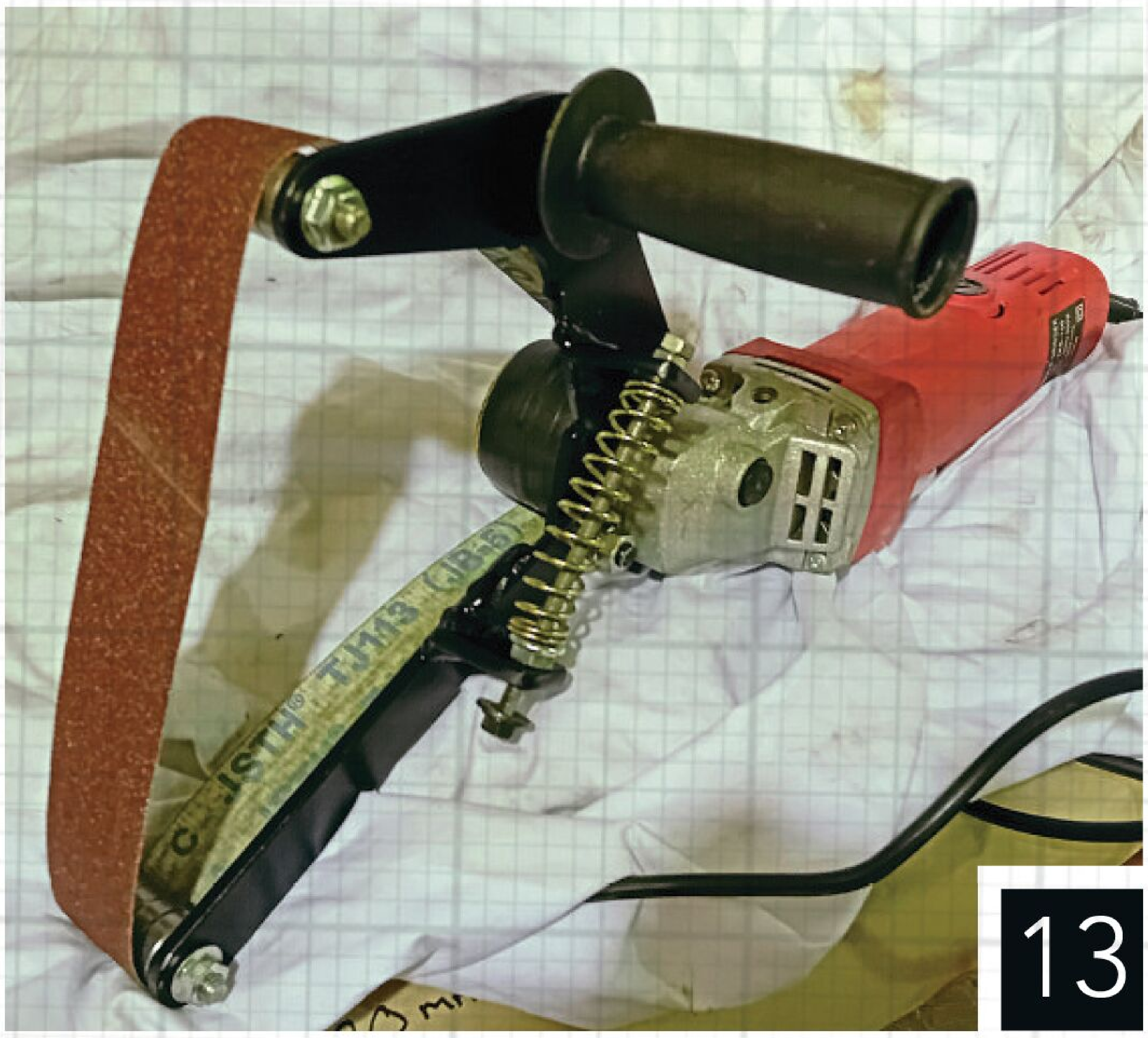
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So far it's worked surprisingly well at what it's intended for, which is sanding down tubes whilst keeping them round. Tidying up welds where a tank-mount crush-tube needs to be flush with the frame tube, and the welds on a sleeved and plug-welded joint, were the main things I had in mind. Once it'd had a coat of paint, it didn't look entirely unlike a power tool (Figs. 12 and 13).

I went to the trouble of making some drawings of the arms, but space limitations in the mag mean there's not a lot of hope of reproducing them at a useful size. What I've done instead is pop them on my blog, and Fig.14 is a QR code that ought to take you to the page in question. They'll still be too tiny on a 'phone I imagine, but viewed on a tablet, or sent to a printer, they should be usable. I did the dimensions as distances between hole centres, so the main bracket could be marked out with a pair of dividers and a centre punch, and the size of the hole for the grinder altered to suit. Final thing to note is that a 100mm grinder uses an M10x1.5mm thread on its spindle, and 115mm grinders use a 14mm thread that I don't know the pitch of, but I'd imagine that finding tube nuts in that size wasn't so easy...

MR. BRIDGES

FERRYMAN

IT'S THE PERFECT COMMUTE TO WORK: A MORNING IN LATE SPRING, WITH EVERYTHING IN LEAF AND BUD, THE SUN WARM WITH A HINT OF SUMMER, BUT WITH ENOUGH CHILL TO MAKE YOU FEEL ALIVE.

The road is miraculously free of traffic, potholes, and mud; it twists, turns, and swoops. I never get bored with my commute - it changes every day, to match my mood, and it never fails to lift my soul. Thirty minutes door to door, the perfect length for a commute they claim, enough time to wind into or out of your work day.

Grinning from ear to ear I pull into the car park. I say carpark - it could take six cars but, as I'm the only one who comes here, it's my personal bike park. Just for the hell of it I blip the throttle, loudly, before killing the engine. I listen to the engine tink, tink, tink in the cool air. This morning's ride is a neat, tidy, little custom; a Yammy XS650 engine, hardtailed frame with a very pleasing top tube that runs from yokes to rear wheel, slightly raked forks, flat 'bars, it's a joy to see and to ride. Black paint work, chrome spoked wheels, it's subtle and understated - you need to look closely to see the detail.

I amble over to the bench set against the wall by the door, pull off my helmet and gloves, roll a cigarette, and sit peacefully for a few minutes, letting the sun warm me through. Life is good. I ease to my feet and turn to the door. It's oak and old, black metal studded with a pointed arch. It opens at my gentle push - it isn't locked, why would it be? No one else ever comes here.

The roll-up dangles from my lips, and I screw my eyes up against the smoke. Yes, I smoke inside, in my workplace - normal rules do not apply here. Helmet and gloves go on the table, jacket on a hook, ready to grab for the first job of the day. I've still got time for a coffee before the jobs start coming in - not an instant coffee, a proper espresso. My day doesn't begin until I'm ready, when I say I'm ready. They say time is a construct - it is here. I have a working day - I go home on an evening, I come in the next morning, but in the 'real' world, no time has passed at all.

I take a moment to savour the coffee, dark and bitter, and to savour the atmosphere of the room. It's very old, single story, built of stone. The sun streams through the leaded windows, pointed arched to match the door. Roughly plastered in off-white, no ceiling, exposed, aged oak beams - think of a small, old, chapel in a monastery; a place of peace, for quiet contemplation.

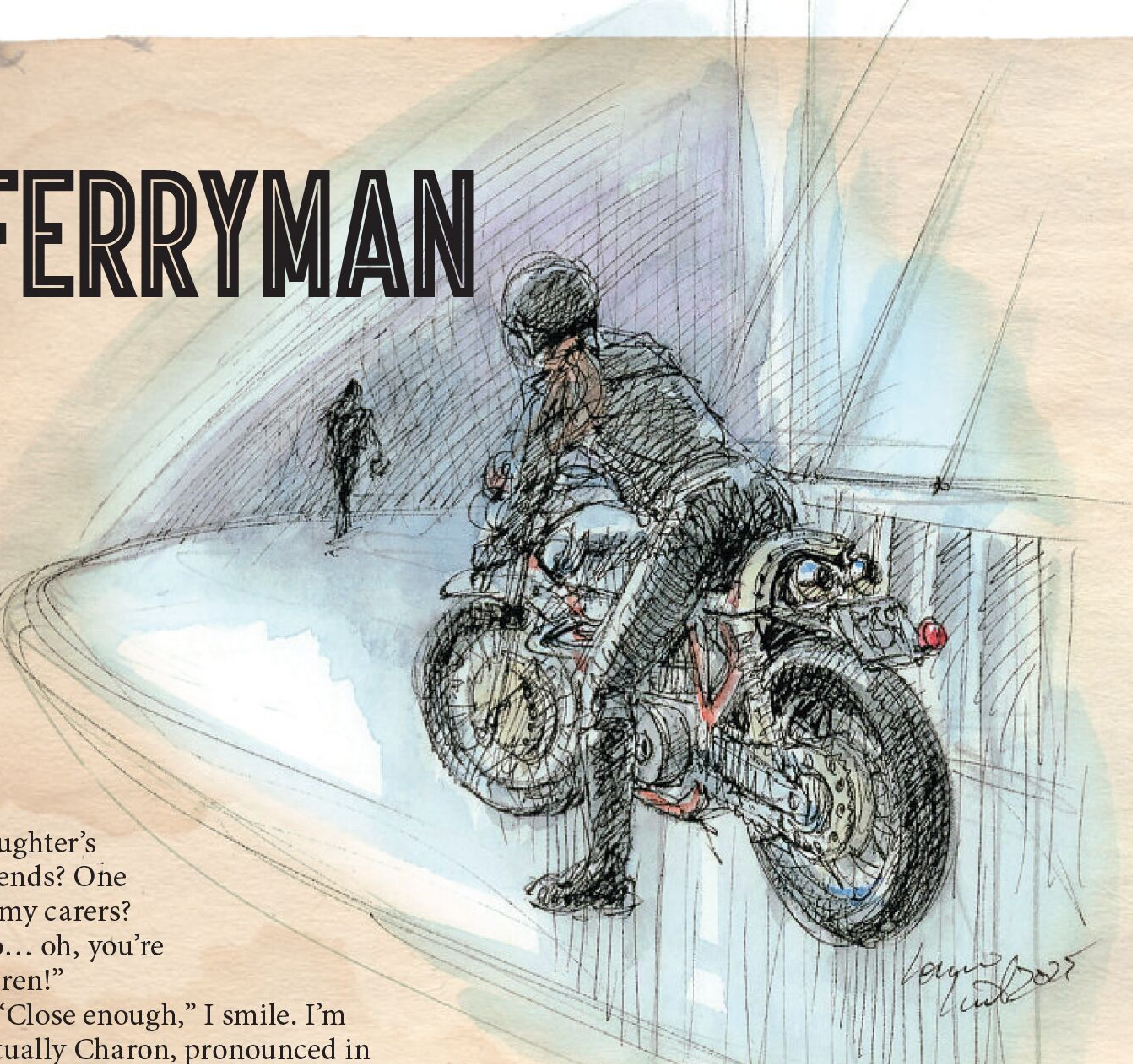
I drain the coffee, and stub out the cigarette, but the tang of both lingers in the air - the modern equivalent of frankincense. A gentle bell rings, an old-fashioned, polite shop bell, and the first job appears on the screen. I don't know how 'they' know I'm ready to start, they just do. I read the information: Elizabeth, 'Lizzie' Eleanor Snow, nee White… oh, come on! Really? That's a wedding notice I'd've loved to see, 'We announce the happy wedding of Snow–White'.

Jacket on, out the door. The XS650's gone, replaced by a '60s British café racer; a proper Triton. Very nice it is, too, polished alloy tank, lots of chrome and polished metal, it gleams. Open-faced helmet on, scarf over face, goggles down, gloves on. The bike fires first kick, of course it does, here it has no choice. I pull out of the car park. Half a mile down the road I run into thick mist - not a problem, this mist is always here. I just keep the bike headed straight. In half a mile the mist thins, and there is Lizzie; a confused, small old lady, in dressing gown and slippers, stood by the side of the road. I pull up alongside her, lift up the goggles, pull down the scarf and smile.

"Hello Lizzie."

"Hello dear, do I know you? I think I do, but where from? Were you one of my

FERRYMAN



daughter's friends? One of my carers? No… oh, you're Karen!"

"Close enough," I smile. I'm actually Charon, pronounced in the Greek way - 'Kharon'."

Lizzie looked at the bike. "Ohhh, what a lovely bike!" She reached over and stroked the gleaming tank. "It takes me back! My Eddie would've loved this bike; we went all over the place on his."

"I know. You and your Eddie, back in the day, on his Triumph, blasting down to the coast, and those little secluded, private spots you found."

The old lady blushed. "How do you know? Oh, I suppose you know everything."

"Pretty much," I smiled again, 'but I won't tell anyone."

I could see questions and doubts flitting across her face. "Shouldn't, shouldn't you be in a boat?" she asked.

"I could be, but bike, boat – both begin with a B and have four letters and, anyway, you don't like boats, do you Lizzie?"

"No, dear, I never learnt to swim, you see - I've always been frightened of water," a hint of regret in her voice. She looked me up and down. "You're not what I expected. I always thought you'd be a man."

"I am, sometimes, but the powers that be got feedback; people found a beardy, hairy-arsed biker off-putting, even the ones who were hairy-arsed bikers themselves. People preferred a woman." I leaned in closer. "In fact," I whispered, "the hairy-arsed bikers were the ones who especially liked a woman coming to collect them."

Lizzie giggled. She looked round and, seeing no one about, said quietly: "I'm glad you're not a man, I much prefer women for the sensitive times."

I smiled. 'Right, Lizzie, ready for a blast?" I patted the seat behind me.

"Oooo, I don't think I can at my age! I couldn't swing my leg that high!"

"At you age?" I queried, and looked her up and down. As she stood there, she'd got younger - she was now a dark-haired young woman in knee-high bike boots, jeans, and a studded black leather jacket; a female rocker ready for a run to Brighton. She looked down at herself, and then at her hands, felt her face and hair. Her eyes were wide, a look of bewilderment, astonishment on her face.

"Bloody hell! How did you manage that?"

"Nothing to do with me, it's the system," I told her.

"Don't I need a helmet?"

"Like the one in your hand?"

She looked down at the helmet that hung from her right hand. "Bloody hell!" she said again, before quickly pulling the helmet on. She paused: "Aren't I supposed to pay you a coin?"

I shook my head. "Not anymore. People used to pay a coin, but Admin decided recording all the payments wasn't cost-effective." Yes, even here we have pen-pushing, bean-counting admins and accountants.

Lizzie fastened the helmet, and easily swung herself on to the back of the 'bike. "I'm ready, dear! Wagons roll!" I smiled to myself and accelerated away, hard, and heard her laughing with pure joy.

……

There're two routes I can take, not that I have a choice over which I use – that's predetermined higher up the chain. Each route is awe-inspiring but in very different ways.

One drops down and down, into a tunnel that goes under the river. It isn't like any tunnel you'll've been through; nothing prepares you for it. It twists and turns, down and down until you think it can't go any deeper, but it does, it does. You've heard the expression, 'The bowels of the earth'? Think deeper. And then there's the noise. At the start it's amazing, the growl of a speeding bike engine echoing back and back off the walls, but there's no let-up - the noise builds and builds; it roars, and you feel your internal organs shake. It takes over all your senses, becomes a torture - the first of many. I'm always glad to get out of there, and try not to think of what'll happen to those I deliver.

Not today though. I'm not supposed to be emotionally involved with the 'clients', but I can't help myself. My spirits lifted when the road started to climb upwards, in great swooping, exhilarating turns; bank into them, power on, accelerate on the exit. The sun shines, and I was pleased, oh so pleased, for Lizzie.

Every now and then she'd whoop or call out, her words lost in the wind, it didn't matter – I knew she was enjoying herself. If you're going to have a last ride, none could beat this.

The best is saved for last - the bridge. Think of the Millau Viaduct in southern France; the elegant, oh so high, bridge that goes on and on. Think bigger, higher, longer – the river a thin strip in the valley below. We speed full throttle over it, but I ease back near the end, and roll to a stop half a mile later, just short of a mist that hid the road - the future.

I turn to Lizzie. "This's it. This's as far as I go."

She climbed off the bike. "Thank you," she said, with a smile as wide as the bridge. "What do I do now?"

I nodded towards the mist. "Just walk into the mist - keep going, it clears quickly."

"I… I… I…" Doubt and fear grabbed her.

I took her hand. "It'll be fine, you'll see." I smiled encouragingly, knowing it would be fine.

"Do… do you think… Eddie?"

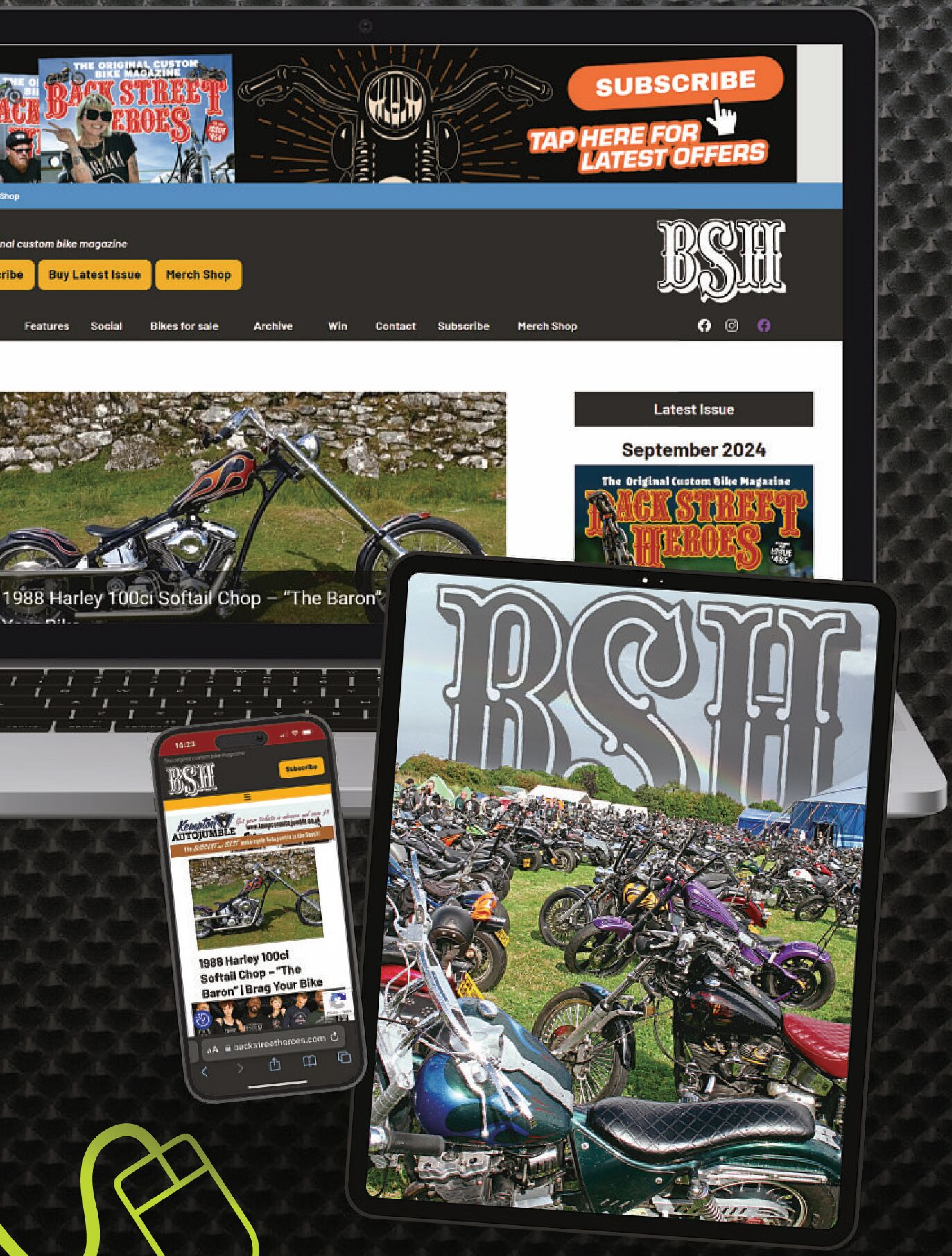
"Lizzie, I honestly don't know - they don't tell me. I'm just the ferryman… well, ferry person."

She managed a weak smile, turned, squared her shoulders, and headed into the mist. I didn't stay to see her go, just swung the bike through a turn, not a problem, I'm the only traffic this bridge sees, and headed back.

Would I have time for a roll-up and a coffee before the next job? I hoped so. A run to the tunnel always left me drained, needing time to recover; a roll-up and coffee for emotional recovery, but not today. Today, I just wanted to sit and savour the moment; the run over the bridge, and to celebrate the life that was Lizzie.

DRIFT SNOWBARGER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
LOUISE LIMB

BACK STREET HEROES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DRAGON SOUL BIKER CAFE

Dragon Soul, the springer fork specialists, have moved from their workshop in Telford to new premises on Forton Road in Newport in Shropshire (TF10 7JR), where they've combined the making and fitting of their high-quality springers with a really nice, modern, but relaxed coffee shop/café/shop that has a lovely vibe, and plenty of parking, and is a very cool place to call in at on a ride-out or as a destination in itself. Their coffee is excellent, and their range of cakes huge, and you can even discuss and get yourself one of their excellent springer front ends, too!

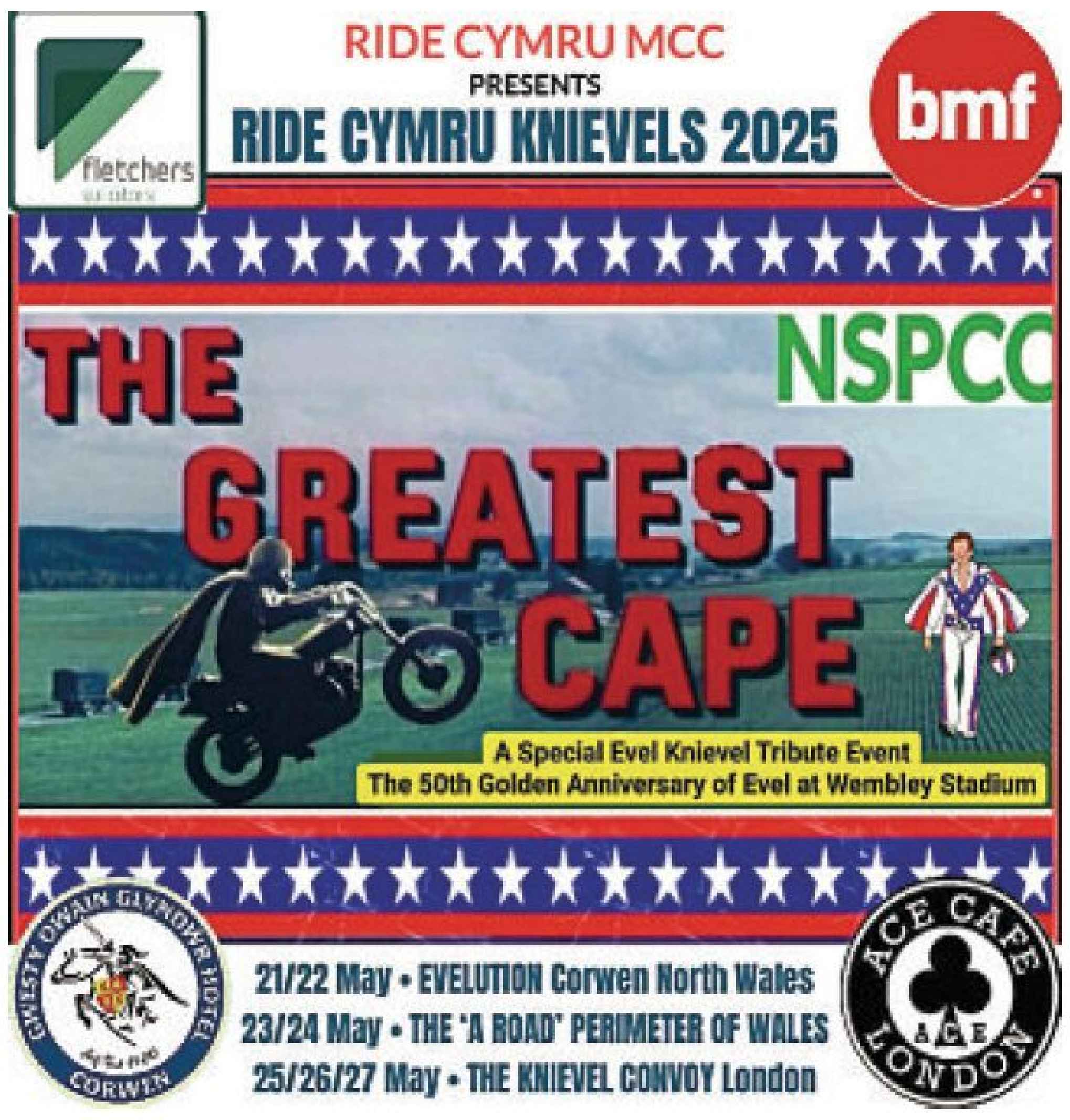
Dragon Soul Biker Café is on **07807 567397** or you can find them on social media.

GIFTS
SOUVENIRS
COFFEE SHOP
CLOTHING ACCESSORIES
WELCOME
DRAGON SOUL
Bikers
COFFEE
OPEN
BIKERS COFFEE SHOP
CLOTHING GIFTS ACCESSORIES
EAT IN

IS THIS YOURS?

Did you send in a fiction story entitled 'And There's Nothing I Can Do'? If so, drop Nik a line at **nik@backstreetheroes.com** please!

RIDE CYMRU KNIEVELS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PRESENTS
RIDE CYMRU KNIEVELS 2025
bmf
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NSPCC
THE GREATEST CAPE
A Special Evel Knievel Tribute Event
The 50th Golden Anniversary of Evel at Wembley Stadium
21/22 May • EVELUTION Corwen North Wales
23/24 May • THE 'A ROAD' PERIMETER OF WALES
25/26/27 May • THE KNIEVEL CONVOY London
OWAIN GLYNDWR HOTEL CORWEN
ACE CAFE LONDON

2025 is the 50th anniversary of Evel Knievel's legendary show at Wembley Stadium in London in 1975, and Ride Cymru's Knievels (charity riders dressed as the legendary stuntman) will be doing their usual long-distance challenge to raise money for charities (this year the NSPCC – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).

Ride Cymru have linked up with the Knievel family, who follow and endorse their annual charity events, to invite them over to celebrate this. They'll be doing a social evening at the Owain Glyndwr Hotel in Corwen (LL21 0DL) on Thursday, May 22, and then at the Ace Cafe in London on Sunday, May 25.

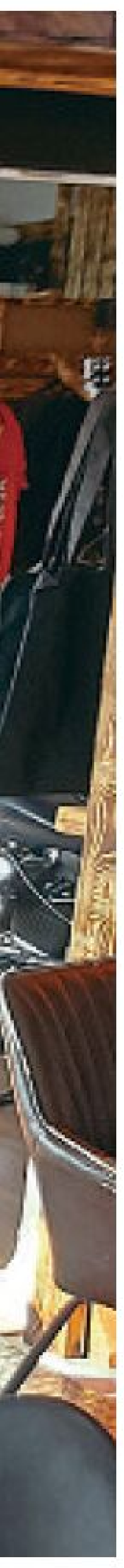
Anyone who'd like to support the 2025 Knievel riders, who'll cover approx. 2,000 miles for the NSPCC, can visit their Just Giving page at **www.justgiving.com/page/1975** or just turn up at the hotel in Wales or the Ace.

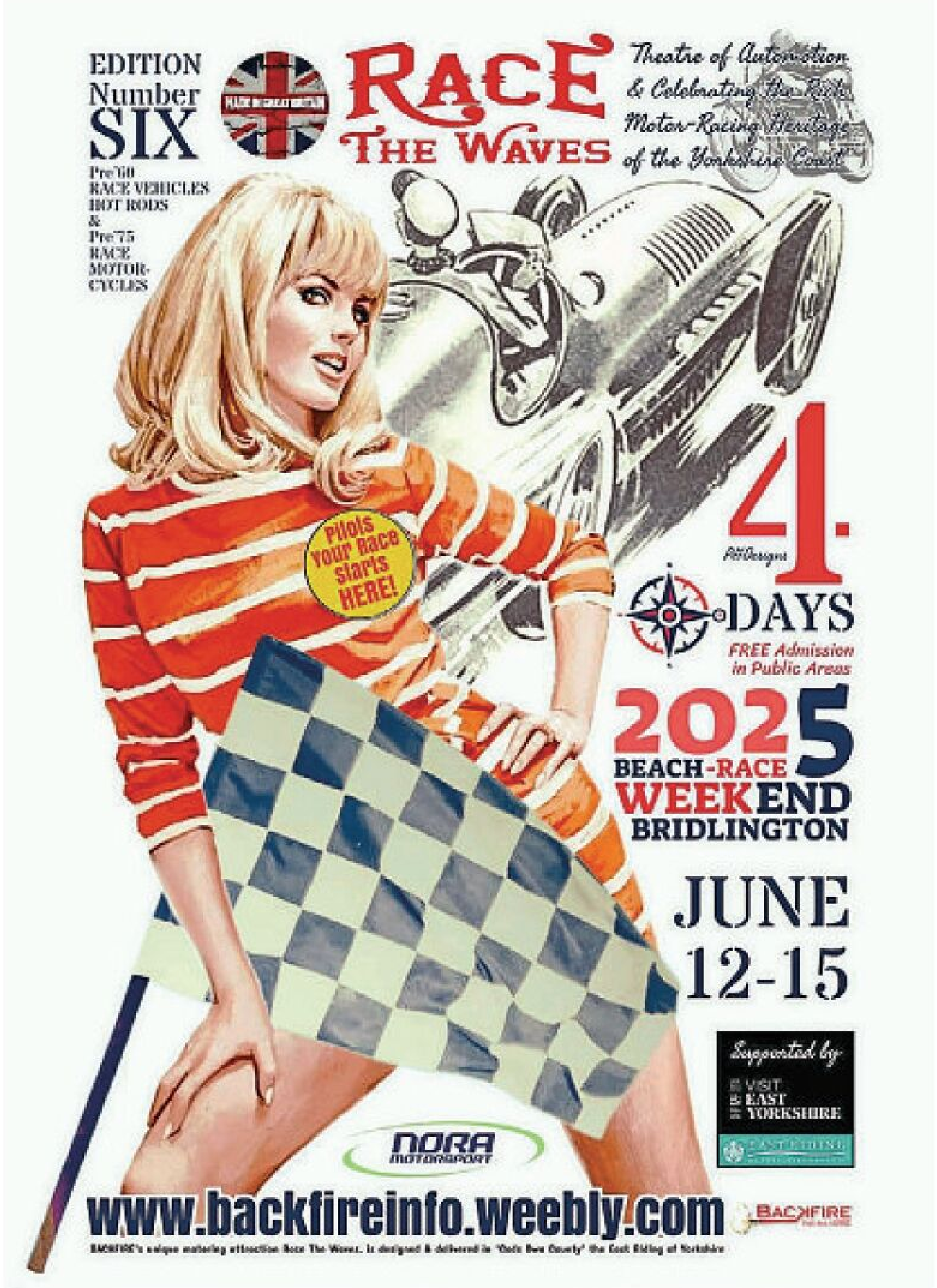
RIDE TO WORK DAY

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has announced the date of this year's Ride To Work Day, Tuesday, 10 June, and they're calling on riders across the UK to hit the roads and showcase the power of two wheels.

As the Government shapes its Integrated National Transport Strategy (INTS), MAG is leading the charge to prove that mopeds, scooters and motorcycles are vital – a practical, sustainable transport future. With congestion clogging Britain's roads, and emissions targets looming, this's the moment for riders to show motorcycles're part of the future. MAG's vision, submitted to the INTS' call for ideas, highlights how motorcycling slashes traffic, cuts emissions, and gives people real travel choices in both urban and rural locations, and on 10 June we can turn that vision into action, demonstrating how two wheels ease gridlock, from London's rush hour to Cornwall's winding lanes.

With the Government's focus on a 'people-first' network, Ride To Work Day is the perfect stage to spotlight motorcycling's benefits of less space, lower costs, and a lighter carbon footprint. Visit the Ride To Work Day website for more information.




EDITION
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starts
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BACKFIRE

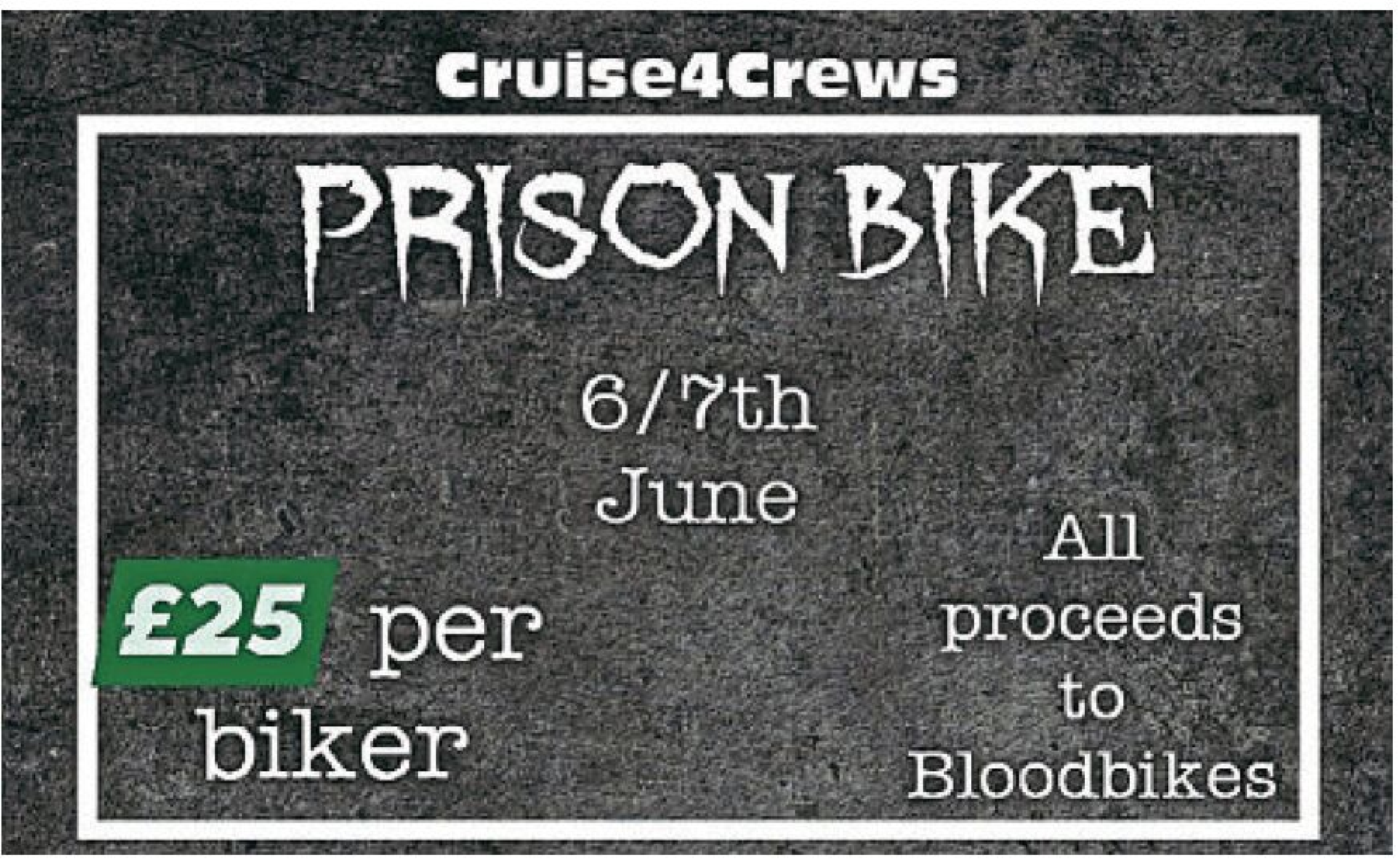
RACE THE WAVES

This year's Race the Waves Beach Race on the beach at Bridlington, East Yorks, is to be held over the weekend of 14-15 June on the town's South Beach.

Entry is, as usual, free to spectators (go to the event's website to get details of how to race), and there's not only the beach racing to watch, but also a list of attractions around the town all weekend to keep everyone interested.

Get more info' from the event's website at **www.backfireinfo.weebly.com** or from their social media pages.

PRISON BREAK OUT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biker
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proceeds
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Bloodbikes

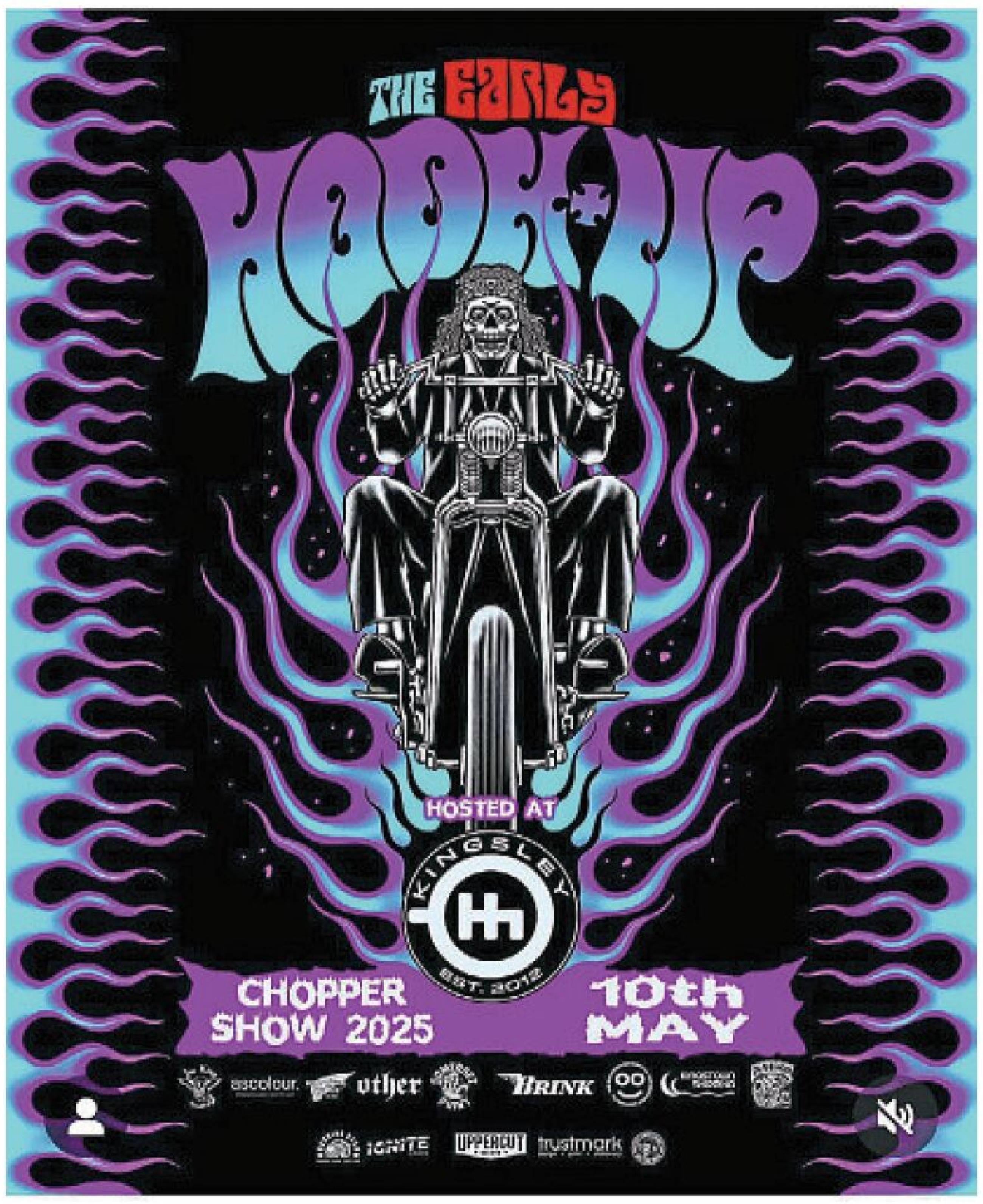
Want to stay overnight in an old jail, and a haunted one at that?

Prison Break Out is a charity event for the Blood Bikes, organised by Cruise4Crews, that starts at Shepton Mallet Jail and rides to Shrewsbury Jail for an overnight stay. Tickets cost £25, and you can get more info' from the Prison Break Out page on Facebook.

EARLY HOOK UP

The Early Hook Up's moved! Previously at the late Mutt Motorcycles' showroom in Birmingham, for this year it's at The Kingsley Café, A40 By-Pass, Eynsham, Witney, Oxon (**OX29 4EF**) on Saturday, 10 May.

Tickets are £30.84, including fees, from The Hook Up's website at **www.the-hook-up.co.uk**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MAY

NORTON DEALERS

Want to test-ride a new Norton? Here's the full list of dealers:

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Judd Racing in Nottingham **(NG2 4EL)**
Krazy Horse in Welling **(DA16 3RQ)**
Krazy Horse in London **(W14 8NL)**
Krazy Horse in Chipping Norton **(OX7 4BN)**
Krazy Horse in Bury St Edmunds **(IP32 6NU)**
Macpherson Motorcycles in Plymouth **(PL1 2JL)**
Norton Motorcycles in Solihull **(B90 4SH)**
Oakmere Motor Group in Northwich **(CW9 7NA)**
OMG Brook Garage in Prestbury **(SK10 4AL)**
Revolutions in Perth **(PH1 3DZ)**
South Downs Motorcycles in Petersfield **(GU32 3PL)**
Teasdale Motorcycles in Sowerby **(YO7 3FF)**
Williams Automobiles in Chipping Sodbury **(BS37 6QG)**

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ROADSKIN SUMMER GLOVES

Roadskin's new Summer Motorcycle Gloves're made from high-quality goat leather, renowned for its superior abrasion resistance and supple feel, and feature a meticulously perforated design to maximise airflow, keeping hands cool and comfortable even on the hottest summer rides, while integrated knuckle and scaphoid protection ensure robust safety. They're touchscreen-compatible, and've obtained EN13594: Level 1 KP certification.

Available in sizes XS to 4XL, the Roadskin Summer Motorcycle Gloves have two colour options, classic black and vintage brown, and cost just £59.99 exclusively online from **www.roadskin.co.uk**

TUCK & ROLL SPRING SOLO SEATS

These black vinyl-covered solo seats have a steel base, and come in two sizes (10 inches/25cm wide by 11.5 inches/28cm long, and 11.5 inches/28cm long and wide), feature two 5/16th-inch-24 UNF threaded inserts in the rear to mount them on the seat springs, and two at the front for the seat hinge (mounting kit, springs, and seat hinge must be ordered separately).

Get yours from anywhere that stocks the Zodiac range or **www.zodiac.nl**

WEISE SCOUT JACKET

Weise've added a 'camo' version of its popular Scout mesh jacket to its line-up, with extra-large mesh panels at the front, rear, and on each arm to deliver maximum airflow to keep the wearer cool on even the stickiest summer ride. It's AA-rated for protection, with tough 600 Denier fabric on shoulders and elbows, CE-approved Level 2 shoulder and elbow armour, and has a Level 1 back protector included as standard. Adjustment at the waist, sleeves, and cuffs helps reduce billowing, and stretch panels give freedom of movement on and off the bike, while two external and two internal pockets offer plenty of room for essentials.

The Weise Scout Camo Jacket retails at just £139.99 and comes in sizes S-5XL, and's also available in black, olive and stone colour options. A connection zip attaches it to the matching Scout mesh jeans (also AA-rated, and armoured, and with large front and rear mesh panels over thigh and calf to keep the legs cool), which cost £129.99 in all the usual sizes, and both're covered by a two-year warranty for complete peace of mind. Find them both at **www.weiseclothing.com** or wherever the Weise range is sold.

VITY'S BILLET SWINGARMS

These billet aluminium swingarms fit 2018-to-present Softails and 2014-2016 Twin Cam Touring and 2017-to-present Milwaukee Eight Touring models, and're lighter and sturdier than stock, increase driving stability, and improve control, feature upgraded axles and bearings, and're easy to install with no permanent modifications of the bike (but the Softails need a radial brake caliper such as the PM Radial mount 4-piston calipers, ZPN 743172 or 743082, and a Vity rear brake caliper bracket, and these fit the Touring models, too, if you want to upgrade). The swingarms and caliper brackets are CNC machined from billet aluminium, and come in raw aluminium or various anodised finishes. Get yours from anywhere that stocks the Zodiac range or **www.zodiac.nl**

OXFORD ARMOURLITE JOGGERS

The Armourlite AA Joggers have the knees and hips lined with double-layered Armourlite fabric for increased safety, and CE level 2 protectors to provide impact protection. They're made from high tenacity polyamide with cotton to create a soft yet highly protective fabric that meets rigorous CE abrasion, tear and seam strength standards, while stretch ribs at the cuffs ensure a perfect fit, and two side pockets with zips provide storage space when riding. There's a short connection zip for attaching the garment to your jacket or hoodie.

Available in sizes S to 5XL, they cost £119.99 from anywhere that stocks the Oxford Products range or **www.oxprod.com**

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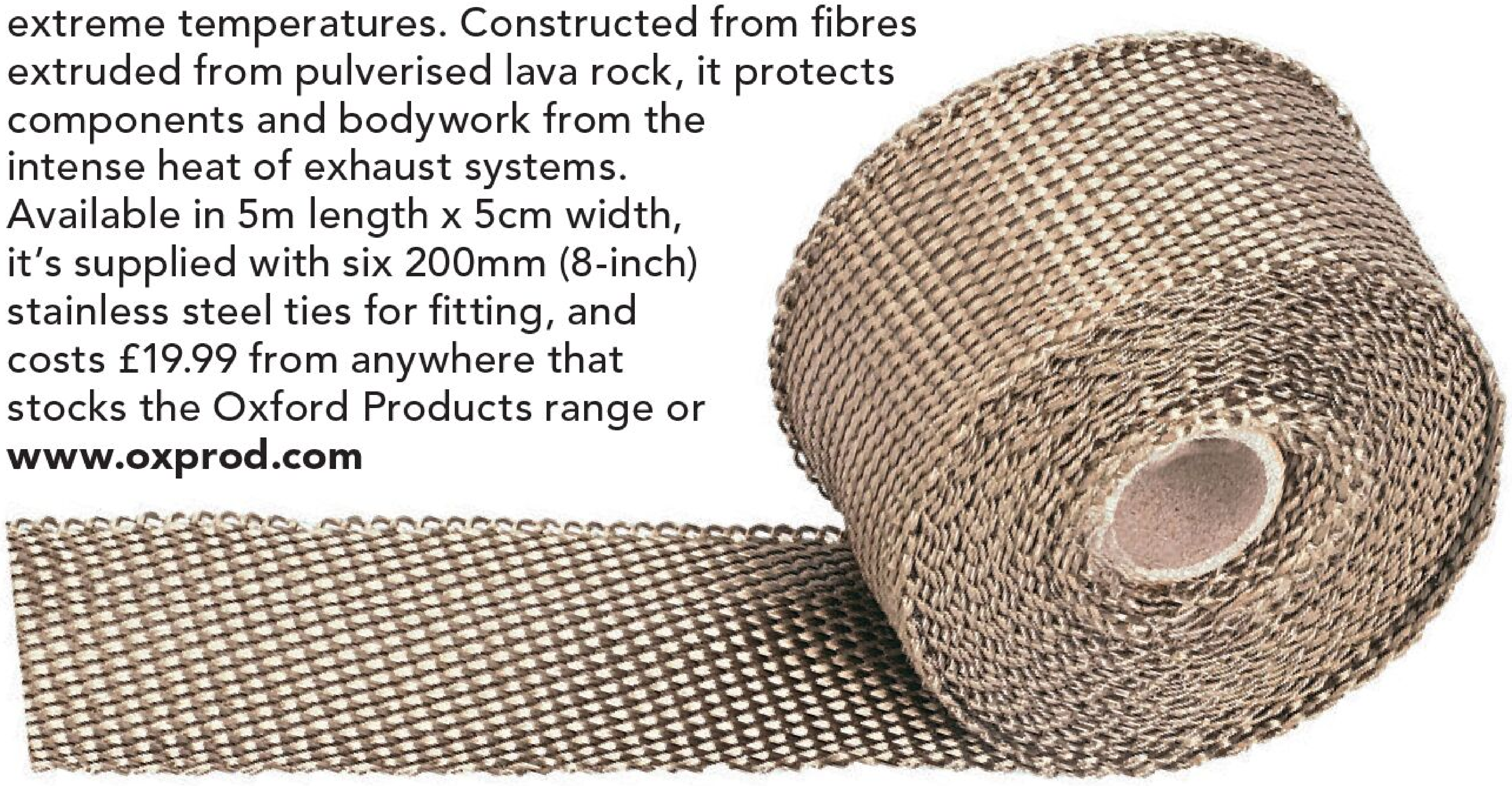
500ml ℮

Mint Waterless Clean & Shine's been developed for quick and easy cleaning without the need for water. When your bike needs a freshen up between washes, the foaming action lifts away dust, stains, and smears to leave a deep, polished shine, making it the perfect all-in-one cleaner. Suitable for all types of bodywork, (original manufacturer) painted, and plastic parts, it's perfect for indoor cleaning, mint-scented, and biodegradable, and costs £9.99 from anywhere that stocks the Oxford Products range or **www.oxprod.com**

OXFORD EXHAUST HEAT WRAP KIT

This exhaust wrap kit's capable of withstanding extreme temperatures. Constructed from fibres extruded from pulverised lava rock, it protects components and bodywork from the intense heat of exhaust systems. Available in 5m length x 5cm width, it's supplied with six 200mm (8-inch) stainless steel ties for fitting, and costs £19.99 from anywhere that stocks the Oxford Products range or **www.oxprod.com**



SIERRA DESIGNS CLIP FLASHLIGHT TENT

The Sierra Designs Clip Flashlight two-person tent (RRP £230) easily stands up to the heavier demands of British camping and weather, without neglecting the efficiencies needed for biking or breaking your gear budget. With a super-breathable mesh body and a two-pole set up, it weighs under 1.8kg (about the same as a helmet), and's made from recycled polyester taffeta fabric, and has a full vestibule and porch-able awning to extend your square footage for more gear storage and shelter. Other smart features such as the Night Glow lantern accessory, colour-coded poles, and burrito bag storage help to take the work out of camping chores and outdoor living.

Get yours from anywhere that stocks the Sierra Designs range or **www.sierradesigns.com**

[RECOMMENDED]

MERLIN AXE HYDRO WATERPROOF KEVLAR RIDING SHIRT

At the end of March I took Pam's Bandit chop to the Boot Bikers' event, wearing the Merlin Axe Hydro waterproof Kevlar riding shirt. The roads were damp, and the chop's got a very small rear mudguard, and it rained on the way home, too, and while the outside of the Axe Hydro did get wetter than an otter's wetsuit, and was sprayed with road dirt, too, inside it I stayed completely dry, as did all the stuff in my pockets – very impressed! It also dried out in about an hour, and was easy to clean the hem-to-collar road kak off, too, with just a soft brush, and still looks perfect. It was comfortable, even in the leant-forward riding position, and the armour sits just where it should do.

As I said the other month, the Axe Hydro's available in red/black (which's what I've got) or grey/black in sizes S to 4XL, and RRP (including VAT) is £179.99. Get yours from anywhere that stocks the Merlin range or **www.merlinbikegear.com** – highly recommended!

[RECOMMENDED]

WEISE SPRINT GLOVES

As the summer approaches (allegedly), it's time to put the winter gloves away and break out the lighter summer ones, and these Weise Sprint gloves're my new 'uns.

They're full-grain leather with TPU knuckle and scaphoid armour, have TPU vented finger armour, padded palms, wrists, fingers, thumb, and cuff panels, dual-layered leather in critical zones, accordion stretch panels for added flexibility, and adjustable cuffs, and they're touchscreen-compatible so you can operate your 'phone/sat-nav without taking 'em off. They're comfortable, fit well, and feel right, and they seem to be holding off the water on the occasions I've been caught out in the rain, too.

Available in sizes S to 3XL, and in the correct colour for gloves, black, they cost £129.99 from anywhere that stocks the Weise range or **www.weiseclothing.com**

[RECOMMENDED]

KEIS HEATED CLOTHING

I've had a Keis heated vest for years now, and I can honestly say it's probably the best bit of bike kit I've ever had. It's simple, lightweight, plugs into either the bike or an optional battery pack, and comes with a lifetime warranty on the heating element.

I've used mine, usually on the battery pack, for journeys in the winter, long and short, for early-morning spring and autumn rides, overnight runs in the summer – all-year round. I've worn it under winter bike gear in sub-zero temperatures, and under lighter summer gear on colder mornings or for long rides, and it's always kept me warm and in control – because your core stays warm, and your hands and feet don't get as cold as the blood doesn't get dragged away from them, thereby keeping your organs warm, and they stay flexible. Similarly, the cold doesn't get to your head and make you sluggish, keeping you alert and in control. The battery, on the lowest setting (which's all I've ever really needed) lasts about four hours, too.

Recently, after many years of faithful service, mine stopped working so, after testing the connections n' stuff, I contacted Keis Apparel and sent it off to them on a Wednesday – they repaired it on the Thursday, and it was returned Friday working perfectly again! Excellent service!

Mine's an old one, but the latest V501 Heated Vest features heat across the chest and back areas, using Micro Carbon Fibre heating panels which emit a comfortable level of warmth. It's dual-powered, and can either be connected to your bike or used with a portable Keis battery pack, and costs just £140 from anywhere that stocks the Keis range or **www.keisapparel.com**

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ALL ROADS LEAD TO KILLARNEY

30 MAY - 01 JUNE 2025

MAIN STAGE LINEUP

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LIVE LIZZY
QWEEN
SATURDAY 31 MAY
WHIPLASH METALICA TRIBUTE
JOANOVARC
SUNDAY 01 JUNE
THE HARLEYS
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Letters

NEED TO AGREE, OR EVEN DISAGREE, WITH SOMETHING YOU'VE SEEN IN THE MAG?
HEARD A BLOODY AWFUL JOKE YOU THINK WE SHOULD GROAN AT? EMAIL **NIK@BACKSTREETHEROES.COM**
OR SEND IT SNAILMAIL TO THE ADDRESS SOMEWHERE IN THE MAG!

star LETTER

The best letter each month wins a BSH tee-shirt

DEAR BSH,

It's a strange world that we inhabit – not the world in general (though that is indeed strange as we all know), no, I refer to the world of custom motorcycles that we chopper people inhabit. I say strange for several reasons. As far as I'm aware this is the only artform that involves continuous destruction and rebirth, so to speak.

For instance, the idea of paying £5,000 or more for a painting or sculpture's not unreasonable depending on the artist and all the other details that uphold its value. However, the idea that I might take that painting home and redo the sky a different colour is just absurd, and the same goes for a sculpture – would I buy the Venus de Milo and give her a nose job or make arms and hands, etc.? No, of course not. Motorcycles, on the other hand, are bought at all sorts of prices with the sole intention of taking them apart, throwing bits away, repainting, welding and more.

In the world of music, many versions of The Immigrant Song, originally by Led Zeppelin, are available now including reggae versions, classic symphonic versions, ad infinitum, but one can always go back to the original – the original song is still there, but to build a chopper one must first destroy (even if only in part) the original Triumph Bonneville, Suzuki GSX-R, Harley-Davidson or whatever it started out as, but it doesn't stop there…

As some people may know, I buy and sell choppers of all descriptions for a living. When I'm buying I naturally point out what needs fixing, and what else I'd like to change, and I take these things into account before agreeing a price. Likewise, when I'm selling I have to take those same things into account for my buyer. Even if the bike runs fine and is mechanically sound, the purchaser may well be intending to make large or small changes that'll cost time and money. This doesn't apply to standard bikes.

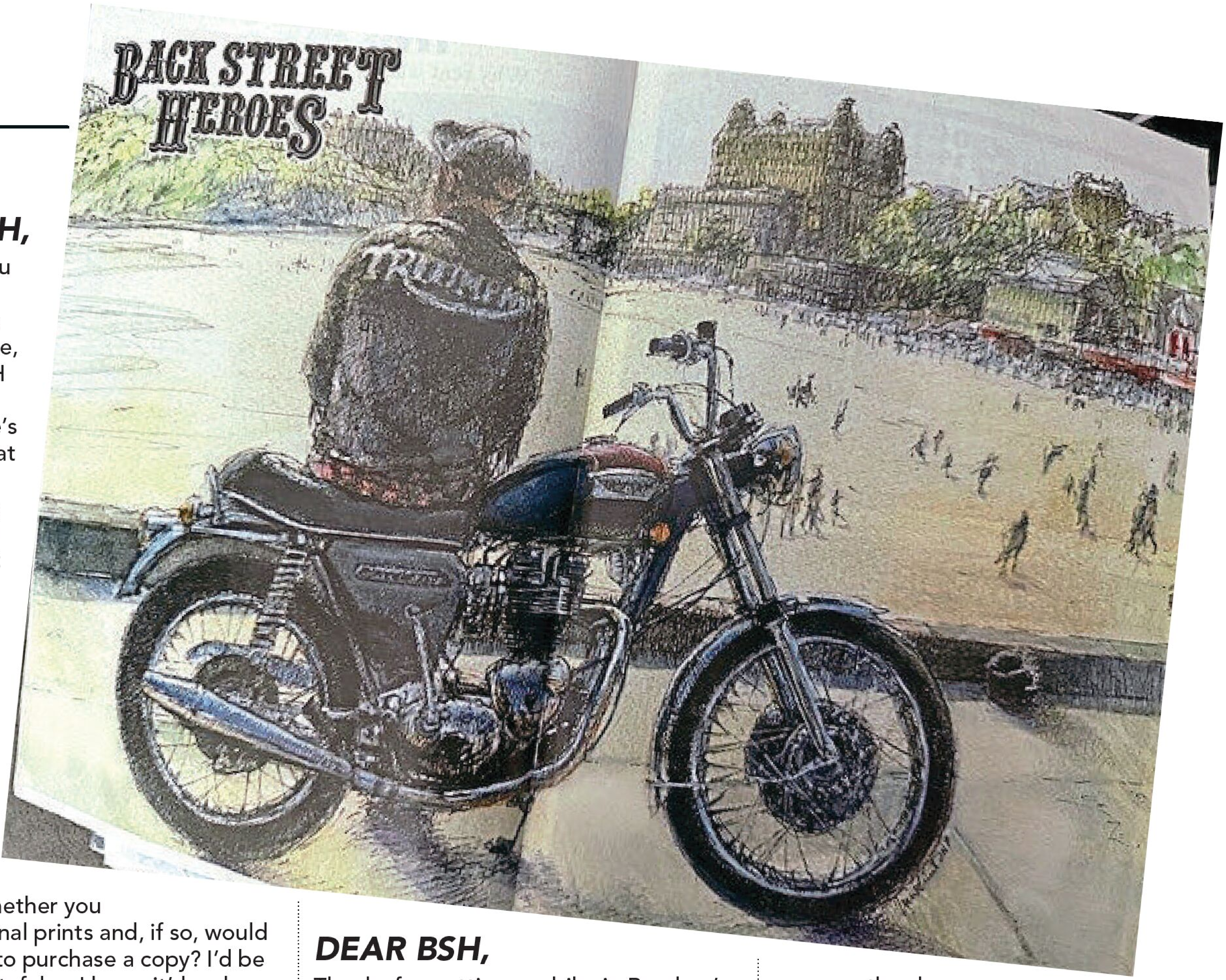
Take the old Norton ES2 I bought recently, for instance. It came in from Norway last year, and is a 1953 500cc single-cylinder. It may've been a Norwegian military machine, or maybe it had a long history of moving around Europe before ending up in the hands of a man with an angle-grinder, who knows? Now it's here, repatriated so to speak, and nobody'll buy it without intending to make some changes – maybe it'll go to a restorer and go back to looking like it just rolled off the production line, or maybe it'll get treated to a hardtail and 12-inch-over springers. That's the whole point – continuous destruction and rebirth.

There have to be reasons for all this. First off, anybody with a modicum of technical knowledge, time, and a few pounds, can do it. One can customise a motorcycle enough to please oneself, if not everybody else, and, of course, the more skilled you are, or the more money you have to pay other skilled people, the better the results (better, of course, being a subjective term!). Also, the idea that we can do this relatively easily appeals to a lot of us and, dare I say it, show off our art with ease to both those that appreciate it within the custom bike world and also to strangers in the street that know nothing of motorcycles – when you park up a loud, strange-looking, shiny motorcycle in a busy street you get a lot of attention. In essence, when you ride your chopper you become a mobile work of art that flashes past all and sundry within seconds, and yet can still leave a lasting impression on innocent bystanders and the all-knowing alike. Then, of course, there're shows and rallies where the details can be appreciated by the knowledgeable. There's only one simple rule: it must be a motorcycle, capable of being ridden safely for a considerable distance (twice round the car park in first gear does not count).

Oddly, in this world of computers and techno everything, this hands-on artform seems to be still growing among the younger generations who are still eager to get their hands dirty, master the machine, and embrace the art so, in conclusion, keep chopping, spraying, welding, and changing things – there're plenty of stock classics and modern machines out there to appreciate for the history. Ride on, and ride free.

ROBERT LEE

PS. New owner found for the Norton, so be nice to see what he does with it.



DEAR BSH,

I wonder if you could help. My husband's retiring in June, and's had BSH from the first edition. There's one sketch that he loves and keeps looking at, and's built his retirement around it as it's uncanny in its resemblance – it's him (although it isn't, of course), his bike, his leather, even his shirt!

I wonder whether you keep the original prints and, if so, would you allow me to purchase a copy? I'd be extremely grateful as I know it'd make his retirement even more special. We're retiring to live next to the sea, and'd love to have this picture framed in our retirement home. It was in issue 402, and I've attached a picture of the said print.

SONIA

We don't here, Sonia, no, cos o' copyright wossnames, but I've passed your letter on to Louise, the artist, as she always has copies of everything she's done.

DEAR BSH,

I'm not saying I'm old, but the first rally I went to was in 1976 so, according to the kids, I'm a dinosaur, especially when it comes to computers and mobile phones – I can just about manage to send the occasional text message and, with guidance from the wife, the very rare e-mail.

My moan is so many bike nights, shows, and rallies say if you want more details look on Facebook, which is fine if you have that facility. I don't, and my poor kids're getting fed up with me keep asking them to look stuff up for me, and then write it down for me, too.

I just wish people'd think of us old farts (seeing as most of us are these days). Not sure what the answer is, maybe I need to learn shi… er, stuff and join the 21st century.

(This letter has been spell-checked by my wife.)

LITTLE JIM, NORFOLK

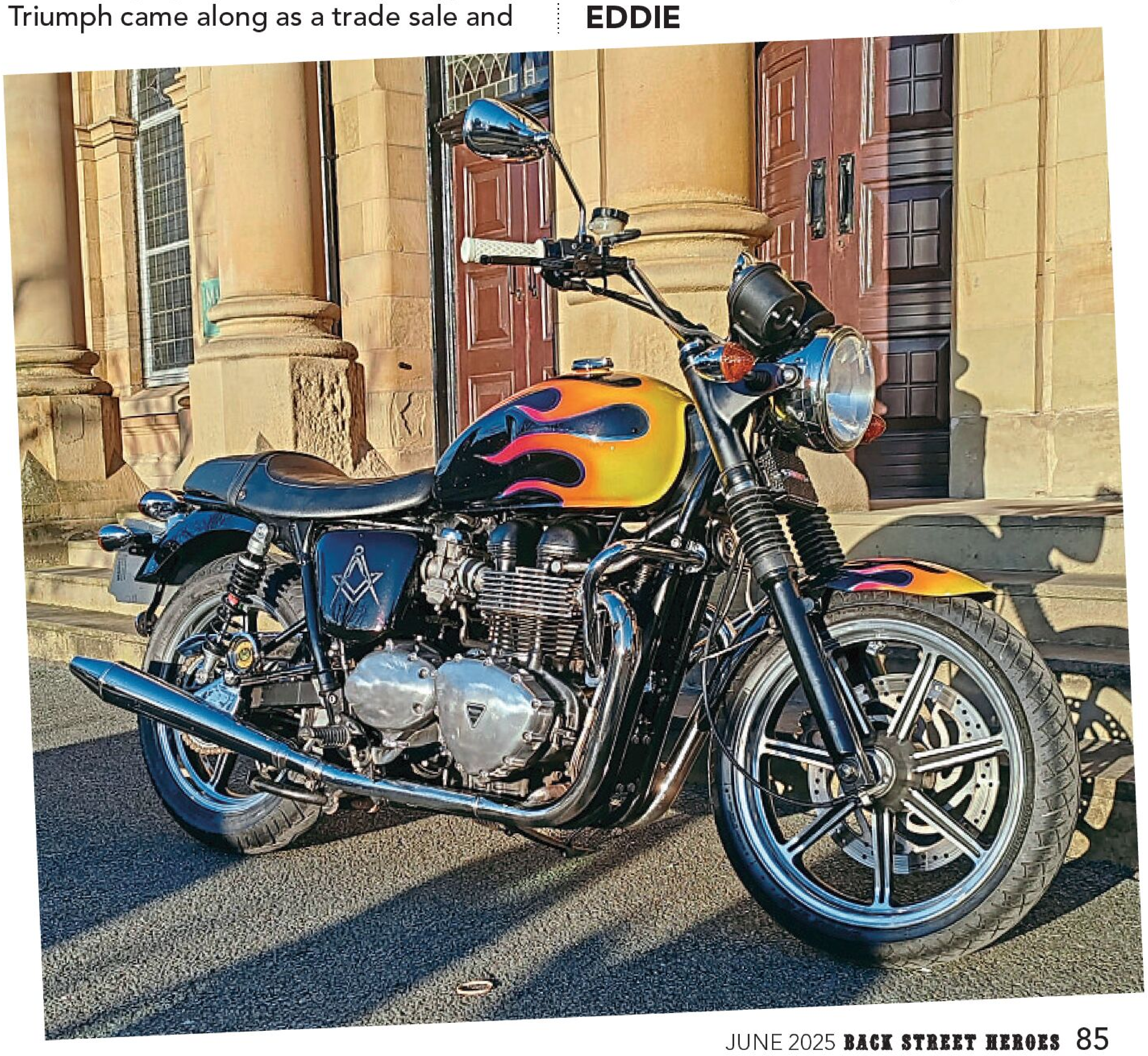
DEAR BSH,

Thanks for putting my bike in Readers' Lives in issue 493. It's in the style of the Bonneville I wanted in 1979 when I passed my test, but I was lured away by a 750/4.

I've struggled to stay on two wheels due to neuropathic pain, and needed something lighter, and this Hinckley Triumph came along as a trade sale and gave me the chance to put together the Bonnie I always wanted, but without the kick-start (I've a knackered right leg). With all the mods it goes better than any Meriden Triumph ever would, and keeps me on two wheels so thanks for letting me show it off.

Sad to hear about Steve Myatt, RIP.

EDDIE



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Events

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MAY

1 May: Late Night at Krazy Horse, Lamdin Rd, Lark Valley Dr, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk (IP32 6NU). More info' from www.krazyhorse.co.uk

1 May-5 May: Stan & Co's Over the Edge Rally at a site on the Isle of Wight. Tickets £40 prebook or £45 on gate. More info' from 07815 692349 or stannjanebaker@gmail.com

2-4 May: Yorkshire MAG's Into The Valley Rally. More info' from www.mapevents.co.uk

2-4 May: Pendragon MCC's Dragonfire Rally at The Chequers Inn, Pertenhall Road, Keysoe, Beds (MK44 2HR). Tickets £20 before 31 March, £25 after. More info' from Facebook.

2-4 May: Patriots MC's Anniversary Party at The Patriot, Main St, Crumlin, Newport, Gwent (NP11 4PT). More info' from www.patriotsmc.co.uk or Facebook.

2-5 May: The Despatch Rally at Mappercombe Farm, Nettlecombe, Bridport, Dorset (DT6 3SS). More info' from www.despatchrally.co.uk

3 May: Revved Up Classics' Car, Bike & Scooter Show at Vintage Metals Ltd, Unit 1G1, Mushet Business Centre, Crucible Cl, Coleford, Gloucs (GL16 8RE). More info' from www.vintagemetals.co.uk or Facebook.

3 May: Dolton Bike Fest at The Royal Oak, The Square, Dolton, Devon (EX19 8QF). More info' from Facebook.

4 May: Italian Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

4 May: Beer, Bikes & Bands at The Banham Barrel, The Appleyard, Kenninghall Rd, Banham, Norfolk (NR16 2HE). Free entry. More info' from Facebook.

4 May: Spring Autojumble at the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley Cross Road, near New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info' from www.sammymiller.co.uk

4 May: Normous Newark Autojumble at The Showground, Drove Lane, Winthorpe, Newark, Notts (NG24 2NY). More info' from www.newarkautojumble.co.uk

4 May: Silent Rumble Bike Show at The Music Box, Bourne Ave, Hayes, Middlesex (UB3 1QT). More info' from Facebook.

4 May: HAMC Sussex's Sussex Stomp at The Robin Hood Inn, Main Rd, Icklesham, Winchelsea, E. Sussex (TN36 4BD). Tickets £5 days, £5 camping. More info' from 07960 344567 or Facebook.

5 May: 2-Stroke & Smoke SC's Mods & Rockers Invasion at Gt Yarmouth seafront, Collingwood Rd, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk (NR30 4LR). More info' from www.scooterrally.co.uk

5 May: Stone Circle Bike Show at Supermarine Sports Club, Supermarine Rd, Swindon, Wilts (SN3 4BZ). More info' from Facebook.

9-11 May: Leyland Eagles' 40th Anniversary Rally at the Canberra Club, Samlesbury Aerodrome, Myerscough Road, Blackburn, Lancs (BB2 7LF). Tickets £20. More info' from Facebook.

9-11 May: HDRCGB Region 14's Wessex Wobbler Rally at a site in Chippenham, Wilts (SN14 0YZ). Tickets £20 members or £25 non. More info' from rusticmonster@hotmail.com or Facebook.

9-11 May: Victory Rally at the Village Hall, Clatt, Huntly, Aberdeenshire (AB54 4NY). Tickets £25 prebook or £30 on gate. More info' from 07562 422472 or victoryrally2000@gmail.com

10 May: Hemsby Wheels Fest at Long Beach Tent & Touring Site, Long Beach Estate, Hemsby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk (NR29 4JD). More info' from Facebook.

10 May: The Early Hook Up at the Kingsley Café, A40 Eynsham, Oxon (OX29 4EF). More info' from www.the-hook-up.co.uk (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE.)

10 May: Wolfpack MC's Run with the Wolves from the H Café, Deacon's Garage, Oxford Rd, Dorchester, Wallingford, Oxon (OX10 7LY) at 11.30am. More info' from Facebook.

10 May: Savages MC's Charity Pub Golf from The Swallow, Pilgrims Way, Andover, Hamps (SP10 5HY) at 10am. More info' from Facebook.

10 May: Kempton Classic Bike Show at Kempton Park, Staines Road East, Sunbury on Thames, Middlesex (TW16 5AQ). More info' from www.kemptonautojumble.co.uk

10 May: Guildford H-D Autojumble at Guildford H-D, Weyvern Place, Weyvern Park, Old Portsmouth Rd, Peasmarsh, Surrey (GU3 1NA). More info' from www.lind.co.uk

10 May: CCW Dyfed & West Glam's Custom & Classic Bike & Trike Show at Parc y Bocs, Kidwelly (SA17 5AB). More info' from 07815 578202 or Facebook.

11 May: BMW Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

11 May: Sunbeam MCC's Ixion Cavalcade from Bexhill-on-Sea, E. Sussex. More info' from DanMoto@mail.com or www.sunbeam-mcc.co.uk

11 May: Pinewood Café Custom Bike Show at the Pinewood Bar & Café, Pinewood Leisure Centre, Old Wokingham Rd, Wokingham, Berks (RG40 3AQ). More info' from www.pinewoodbarandcafe.co.uk or Facebook.

11 May: Rickman Day at the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley Cross Road, near New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info' from www.sammymiller.co.uk

11 May: Stratford Autojumble at Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse, Luddington Road, Stratford-upon- Avon, Warks (CV37 9SE). More info' from www.stratfordautojumble.co.uk

11 May: IMCC's 125-friendly Bigfoot Run from John's Café, Hayling Island, Portsmouth, Hants (PO11 0AS) at 10am. More info' from Facebook.

12-15 May: Sunbeam MCC's Shropshire Mid-Week Break at The Valley Hotel, Buildwas Rd, Ironbridge, Coalbrookdale, Telford, Shrops (TF8 7DW). More info' from pauldawnmorley@talktalk.net or www.sunbeam-mcc.co.uk

15-18 May: Biker Fest Italy at Lignano Sabbiadoro, Udine, Italy. More info' from www.bikerfest.it

16-18 May: MT Heads MCC's It's Going Down in the Lakes Again at Chester Lakes Campsite, Church Rd, Chester (CH4 9LQ). More info' from Facebook.

16-18 May: Double Trouble Rally at Court Farm Country Park, Wolvershill Rd, Banwell, Somerset (BS29 6DL). Tickets £30. More info' from www.doubletroublerally.com

17 May: Feltwell Anglo-American Car & Bike Show at The Playing Fields, Paynes Lane, Feltwell, Norfolk (IP26 4BA). More info' from www.feltwellcarshow.uk

17 May: BACA (Bikers Against Child Abuse) 100 Mile Charity Ride from Wuzzys World Campsite, Ormonde, Ipswich Rd, Tasburgh, Norfolk (NR15 1NS) at 9am. Tickets £10. More info' from www.bacaworld.org

17 May: The Gasket Birthday Bash at The Gasket, Skull House Ln, Appley Bridge, Wigan, Lancs (WN6 9DR). More info' from Facebook.

17-18 May: Sunbeam MCC's Conyboro Run from The Six Bells, The St, Chiddingly, Lewes, E. Sussex (BN8 6HT). More info' from andy.belenkin@virginmedia.com or www.sunbeam-mcc.co.uk

17-18 May: Flying Quarter Sprint Meet at Manston Airfield, Manston Rd, Manston, Ramsgate, Kent (CT12 5BQ). More info' from www.flyingquarter.co.uk or Facebook.

18 May: Distinguished Gentleman's Ride at sites worldwide. More info' from www.gentlemansride.com

18 May: Two-Stroke Day & Fizzy Frenzy at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

18 May: Wildlife Wiscombe Hill-Climb at Wiscombe Park, Southleigh, Devon (EX24 6JE). More info' from www.wiscombepark.co.uk

18 May: NCC Lincs' Custom Show at The Black Bull, Lincoln Rd, Welton, Lincs (LN2 3HZ). Tickets £3. More info' from Facebook.

18 May: Air Ambulance Bike & Car Show at Joyland, Marine Parade, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk (NR30 2EH). More info' from Facebook.

18 May: Musos at The Shelley at The Shelley Arms, Old Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath W. Sussex (RH12 3JU). More info' from Facebook.

18 May: BBQ Vol 9 at Micklefield Community Centre, Centre Approach, Micklefield Rd, High Wycombe, Bucks (HP13 7FY). Tickets £7 prebook or £10 on gate. More info' from Facebook.

18 May: Chopper/Bobber/Custom Harley Show at The Railway Hotel, Preston St, Faversham, Kent (ME13 8PE). More info' from 07903 339466 or Facebook.

22 May: Ride Cmyru's Evel Knievel Day at Langollen Railway (at 11am) and The Owen Glyndwr Hotel, The Square, Corwen (LL21 0DL) at 7pm. More info' from Facebook.

22-25 May: Taunton MAG's Tone Vale Tea Rally at a site on the Somerset Levels (TA9 3RH). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info' from 07780 960869 or sarahrallytvtr@gmail.com

23-25 May: The Smoking Dog Rock & Custom Show at Bishops Auckland Rugby Club, West Mills Playing Fields, Bridge Rd, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham (DL14 7PA). Tickets £15 prebook or £20 on gate. More info' from 07931 177448 or countydurham34@yahoo.com

23-25 May: Sentinels' Piston Pendle Rally at Pendle Forest Sports Club, Old Laund Booth Playing Fields, Barrowford Rd, Fence, Burnley (BB12 9QQ). Tickets £20. More info' from sentinels@gmx.co.uk or section9@secretary.net

23-25 May: Bike Shed Moto Show at Tobacco Dock, Wapping Ln, London (E1W 2SF). More info' from www.bikeshedlondonshow.com

24 May: Big Chris' Big Bash at Keynsham Funduro, Durley Ln, Keynsham, Bristol (BS31 2AJ). Tickets £3, autojumble pitches £5. More info' from 07841 338741 or Facebook.

24 May: Bultaco Owners' Club Meet at the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley Cross Road, near New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info' from www.sammymiller.co.uk

24-26 May: Sanzaru's Breach of the Peace Bike Show at Fort Purbrook, Peter Ashley Ln, Portsmouth, Hants (PO6 1BJ). Tickets £20. More info' from www.sanzaru.co.uk or Facebook.

25 May: Gold Wing Gathering at the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley Cross Road, near New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info' from www.sammymiller.co.uk

25 May: Bideford Bike Show at The Big Sheep, Abbotsham Rd, Abbotsham, Bideford, Devon (EX39 5AP). More info' from www.bidefordbikeshow.org

25 May: RBLRB Day in aid of the Poppy Appeal at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

25 May: East Anglian Copdock Bike Show Charity Run from Copdock & Washbrook Village Hall, London Rd, Copdock, Ipswich, Suffolk (IP8 3JN) at 9am. More info' from www.eacbikeshow.co.uk

25 May: Southampton MAG Bike Show at The Hunters Inn, Cott St, Swanmore, Southampton, Hants (SO32 2PZ). Traders needed, £20 per pitch. More info' from 07954 420210 or 07554 213569.

25 May: Ride Cmyru's Evel Knievel Day at the Ace Cafe, Park Royal, London (NW10 7UD) at 7pm. More info' from Facebook.

25 May: Lowestoft Invaders MCC's Sunrise Motorcycle Rally at Nicholas Everitt Park,Bridge Rd, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk (NR32 1HS) at 10am. More info' from 07964 146249 or www.limcc.co.uk

26 May: Margate Meltdown Run at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

26 May: Ashford Classic Motorcycle Jumble at Ashford Livestock Market, Orbital Park, Ashford, Kent (TN24 0HB). Tickets £10. More info' from www.elkpromotions.co.uk

26 May: Soggy Doggy Charity Run in aid of Hilbrae Rescue Kennels from Shifnal Services (Welcome Break Telford Services M54), Priorslee Road, Shifnal, Shrops (TF11 8TG) at noon. More info' from Facebook.

28 May-4 June: Big Knock Diesel Rally at the Springbok Campsite, Care Ashore, Alford, Surrey (GU6 8EX). More info' from Facebook.

30 May-1 June: The Pott's Bike Bash at Castle Cary RFC, Brook House Field, Castle Cary, Somerset (BA7 7PF). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info' from potts666tcb@gmail.com

30 May-1 June: PILRC's Perverts in Leather Rally at the Ukrainian Youth Centre, Weston-on-Trent, Derbys (DE72 2BU). More info' from www.pilrc.org

30 May-1 June: The Brothers MRC's Rally at Keynsham RFC, Bristol Rd, Keynsham, Bristol (BS31 2BE). Tickets £15. More info' from Facebook.

31 May: Dereham Motorbike Rally at Aldiss Park, Dereham Football Club, Norwich Rd, Dereham, Norfolk (NR20 3PX). More info' from Facebook.

31 May-1 June: MC Pecquencourt's Mechanics Show at Pecquencourt, northern France. More info' from Facebook.

31 May: East Coast Harley Club KL Crew's Custom Bike Show at the Gaywood Community Centre, Gaywood Park, Cemetery Dr, Gayton Rd, Gaywood, King's Lynn (PE30 4EE). More info' from Facebook.

JUNE

1 June: Sunbeam MCC's Rose of the Shires Run from Great Brington, Northants. More info' from 07850 870094 or robertbayman@btinternet.com or www.sunbeam-mcc.co.uk

1 June: VJMC & Japanese Bike Bonanza at the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley Cross Road, near New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info' from www.sammymiller.co.uk

2 June: MAD Sunday & MAG London at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

5 June: Late Night at Krazy Horse, Lamdin Rd, Lark Valley Dr, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk (IP32 6NU). More info' from www.krazyhorse.co.uk

5-8 June: Unwanted MCC's Bike, Trike & Custom Show at The Rockbar, Shobnall Sports & Social Club, Shobnall Road, Burton upon Trent, Staffs (DE14 2BB). More info from www.unwantedmcc.co.uk

6-7 June: Cruise4Crews' Prison Break Out from Shepton Mallet jail at 9am. More info' from Facebook.

Events

6-8 June: Chopper Freakers Band's Chopperfest at Blénod-lès-Pont-à-Mousson, 54700, France. More info' from Facebook.

7 June: Chopper Club S. Ireland's Day Show at The Welcome Inn, Rockfield, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, Eire (X35 TX36). More info' from Facebook.

7 June: Brothers in Arms MCC's D-Day Rally at Loch Lomond Rugby Club, Beechwood Dr, Alexandria, West Dunbartonshire (G83 9LY). More info' from Facebook.

7 June: Bikes, Beer & Big Hearts at The Stepping Stones, Westhumble Street Westhumble, Dorking, Surrey (RH5 6BS). More info' from 01306 889832 or www.steppingstonesdorking.co.uk

7 June: NCC Somerset's Shootin' the Breeze Custom Show at Cheddar Valley RFC, Sharpham Rd, Cheddar, Somerset (BS27 3DR). Tickets £5. More info from 07939 486063 or Facebook.

7 June: Lucky 7s MCC's Custom & Classic Bike Show at The Cherry Tree, Riversdale Ave, Stakeford, Choppington, Northumberland (NE62 5JZ). More info' from Facebook.

7 June: Vintage/Chopper Show at Guildford Harley-Davidson, Weyvern Place, Weyvern Park, Old Portsmouth Rd, Peasmarsh, Guildford, Surrey (GU3 1NA). More info' from www.lind.co.uk/harley-davidson/guildford

7 June: Big Twin MC's Norrtalje Custom Bike Show at The Club House, Norrtalje, Sweden. More info' from www.custombikeshow.se

7 June: Kirkby Kustom Kollective's Kustom Show at The Junction, News Ln, St Helens, Merseyside (WA11 7JU). More info' from Facebook.

7 June: Lucky 7s MCC's Custom & Classic Bike Show at The Cherry Tree, Riversdale Ave, Stakeford, Northumberland (NE62 5JZ). Free entry. More info' from Facebook.

7 June: Brothers in Arms MCC's Overnighter at Loch Lomond Rugby Club, Beechwood Dr, Alexandria, West Dunbartonshire, Scotland (G83 9LY). Tickets £15. More info' from Facebook.

8 June: Triumph Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

8 June: Ride of the Ruperts from Moto Girl, Unit 17, Orchard Business Centre, Sanderson Way, Tonbridge, Kent (TN9 1QF). More info' from www.rideoftheruperts.co.uk

8 June: BSA Owners' Club Day at the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley Cross Road, near New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info' from www.sammymiller.co.uk

8 Jun: Normous Newark Autojumble at The Showground, Drove Lane, Winthorpe, Newark, Notts (NG24 2NY). More info' from www.newarkautojumble.co.uk

8 June: Druids Bike Show at Booleigh, Kildare, Eire (R14E860). Tickets 5 Euro. More info' from Facebook.

8 June: VJMC Hamps' Bike Jumble at Weyhill Country Market, Weyhill, Andover, Hamps (SP11 0PP). Pitches £10. More info' from barterjohn770@gmail.com or Facebook.

8 June: Mavericks Indoor Bike Show at The Churchill Arms, Daggons Rd, Alderholt, Dorset (SP6 3AA). More info' from www.churchillpub.co.uk or Facebook.

8 June: BK Bike Meet at Emma's Café, Pure Triumph, George St, Woburn, Bucks (MK17 9PY). More info' from Facebook.

8 June: Crank Up Transport Show at Binton Social Club, Binton, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warks (CV37 9TU). More info' from 01789 750631 or bintonclub@gmail.com

8 June: NCC Surrey's Freewheel Burning Custom Show at The Dog & Duck, Prince of Wales Rd, Outwood, Surrey (RH1 5QU). Tickets £2. More info' from Facebook.

10 June: Thank God It's Not Friday Bike Show at The Robin Hood Inn, Main Rd, Icklesham, Winchelsea, E. Sussex (TN36 4BD). Tickets £3. More info' from Facebook.

12-15 June: European H.O.G Rally at Medulin, Croatia. More info' from www.harley-davidson.com

12-15 June: Race the Waves at Bridlington Seafront, Bridlington, Yorks. More info' from www.backfireinfo.weebly.com

13-15 June: Bildt Not Bought Chopperfest at St. Annaparochie, Holland. More info' from Instagram.

13-15 June: Dutch Hardly-Rideables' Ratmeeting at MVC Rattlesnakes, Sportlaan 9a, 4571 CA Axel, Netherlands. More info' from www.rataplan-ratbikeclub.nl

13-15 June: Little Kev's Scruffy Puppy Rally at Bourne Rugby Club, Milking Nook Drove, Bourne, Lincs (PE10 0AX). More info' from 07804 087403 or Little Kev on Facebook.

13-15 June: Reading MAG's Lion Rally at a site near Reading, Berks. More info' from Facebook.

13-15 June: Dying Breed Show n' Shine at Westbury Rugby Club, White Horse Country Park, Coach Rd, Westbury, Wilts (BA13 4LU). More info' from Facebook.

14 June: Daventry Motorcycle Festival in Daventry, Northants. More info' from www.daventrybikefest.co.uk

14 June: The Unit MCC's Custom Show at The Angel Inn, Sheffield Road, Woodhouse, Sheffield, Yorks (S13 7EQ). More info' from Facebook.

14-20 June: Dorothy's Speed Shop's Garage Run from Dorothy's Speed Shop, Braunton, Devon. More info' from www.dorothysspeedshop.com

15 June: Polish Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

15 June: Bikefest24's Autojumble Sunday at West Woodlands Showground, Bunns Ln, Frome, Somerset (BA11 5ES). Autojumble pitches £10. More info' from www.bikefest24.co.uk

15 June: Harley-Davidson Day at the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley Cross Road, near New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info' from www.sammymiller.co.uk

18 June: Royston & District MCC's Royston & District Motorcycle Show at the Eternit Sports & Social Club, Whaddon Rd, Meldreth, Royston (SG8 5RL). More info' from Facebook.

18 June: Solstice Evening Bike Show at The Dashwood Roadhouse, Old Oxford Rd, Piddington, Bucks (HP14 3BH) from 6pm. More info' from Facebook.

19-22 June: Estonians MCC's Barnstormer Rally at the Rally Field. Runswick Lane, Runswick Bay, N. Yorks (TS13 5HR). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info' from 07533 204101 or Estoniansmcc@outlook.co.uk

19-22 June: The Farmyard Party at Duncombe Park, Helmsley, Yorks (YO62 5EB). More info' from www.mapevents.co.uk

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19-22 June: Liberators Harley Club's Summer Rally at Fakenham Racecourse, Fakenham, Norfolk (NR21 7NY). Tickets £40. More info' from 07899 700706 or Facebook.

20-22 June: Sun of Solstice Bike & Music Festival at Southam RFC, Station Rd, Southam, Warks (CV47 2DH). Tickets £25. More info' from Facebook.

20-22 June: HDRCGB Region 19's New Forest Rally at Trojans Sports Club, Stoneham Ln, Eastleigh, Hants (SO50 9HT). Tickets £20 members or £25 non. More info' from 07887 746441 or region19@hdrcgb.org

20-22 June: Pissed & Confused MCC's Summer Rally at Little Waltham Sports & Social Club, Tufnell Hall, The St, Little Waltham, Essex (CM3 3NY). More info' from Facebook.

20-22 June: Snatch MCC's Snatch Rally at Wirral Rugby Club, Thornton Common Rd, Birkenhead, Wirral (CH63 0LT). More info' from Facebook.

20-22 June: Druids MCC's Poser Rally at a site in Lincs. Tickets £25 prebook only. More info' from www.druidsmcc.com or Facebook.

21-22 June: Born Free Chopper Show at Silverado, California. More info' from www.bornfreeshow.com

21-22 June: Have a Dave Day at Barrow in Furness, Cumbria. More info' from www.visitbarrow.org.uk

22 June: Custom & Classic Bike & Car Show at the Royal Gunpowder Mills, Beaulieu Drive, Waltham Abbey, Essex (EN9 1JY). Tickets £10. More info' from www.customandclassicshow.co.uk or Facebook.

22 June: Honda Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

22 June: Ride Like a Girl Ladies' Motorcycle Day at M&P Direct, Glynstell Park, Glynstell Cl, Cardiff, Wales (CF11 8EY). More info' from Facebook.

22 June: Ton-Up Day Reunion at Industry & Supply, The Depot, Royal, Ordnance Rd, Weedon, Northants (NN7 4PS. More info' from www.industryandsupply.com

22 June: Prescott Bike Festival at Prescott Speed Hill Climb, Gotherington, Cheltenham, Gloucs (GL52 9RD). More info' from www.prescotthillclimb.co.uk

22 June: Seaford Motofest at The Martello Tower, Seafront, Seaford, East Sussex. More info' from Facebook.

22 June: Ladies' Day at the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley Cross Road, near New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info' from www.sammymiller.co.uk

22 June: Wheels-Next-The Sea at Wells Town FC, Beach Rd, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk (NR23 1DR). Tickets £1 a wheel. More info' from 07470 386565 or stevefinch66@gmail.com

27-29 June: Dragstagia at Santa Pod, Airfield Rd, Podington, Beds (NN29 7XA). More info' from www.santapod.co.uk

27-29 June: Inner Circle RRC's Goosin' the Fox Rally at The Fox & Goose, The St, Greywell, Hook, Hamps (RG29 1BY). Tickets £20, day tickets £10. More info' from Facebook.

27-29 June: HOG Rutland Chapter's Horseshoe Rally at Greetham Community Centre, Greetham, Grantham, Lincs (LE15 7NG). Tickets £37.50. More info' from 07989 859908 or rally@rutlandchapter.co.uk

27-29 June: Wolfpack MCC's Yeknod Rally at Mill Lane, Chalgrove, Oxon (OX44 7SL). Tickets £15 prebook or £20 on gate, day tickets £10. More info' from 07871 200140 or Facebook.

27-29 June: Bracan MCC's Pistons & Pints Rally at The Breighton Ferry, Breighton, Selby, Yorks (YO8 6DH). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info' from www.bracanmcc.co.uk or Facebook.

27-29 June: Greenman MCC's Chaos on the Isle of Guernsey, Channel Islands. More info' from www.chaosevents.com

27-29 June: Blackpool Area MAG Rally at Fleetwood Rugby Club, Melbourne Avenue, Fleetwood FY7 8AY. Tickets £18.50 pre-book or £20 on gate. More info from 07943 254009 or Facebook.

27-29 June: Shoulder of Mutton MCC's Cowpat Rally at Amber Valley Rugby Club Somercotes, Derbys (DE55 4NQ). More info' from Facebook.

27-29 June: Monsters Inc MCC's Monster Bash at Mary Jo's, Barntown, Co. Wexford, Eire (Y35 H626). Tickets 15 Eruro. More info' from 00353 872 490461 or Facebook.

27-29 June: Bear Town Bikers' Bear'ly Standing Rally at The Harrington Arms, Bosley, Macclesfield, Cheshire (SK11 0PH). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info' from 07712 873737 or Facebook.

28 June: Sunbeam MCC's Four Dales Tour from Arkengarthdale, N. Yorks. More info' from www.sunbeam-mcc.co.uk

28 June: Walsham Wheels Motorcycle Fun Day at North Walsham Memorial Park, New Rd, North Walsham, Norfolk (NR28 9DF). More info' from Facebook.

28 June: Gotts Park Custom Show at Gotts Park, Armley Ridge Rd, Leeds (LS12 2QX). More info' from Facebook.

28 June: North Walsham Wheels Show at a site in North Walsham, Norfolk. More info' from Facebook.

28-29 June: Kyndred Spirits MCC's Shot in the Dark Rally at Hexham Racecourse, High Yarridge, Hexham, Northumberland (NE46 2JP). Tickets £10. More info' from Facebook.

29 June: Triton/Cafe Racer Day & BSA GS & RGS OC at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

29 June: Romney Marsh Ride-In Show & Bike Jumble at Hamstreet, Kent (TN26 2JD). Tickets £5. More info' from www.elkpromotions.co.uk

29 June: Sunbeam MCC's Northern Pioneer Road Test from Tennants Auctioneers, Auction Centre, Harmby Rd, Leyburn, N. Yorks (DL8 5SG). More info' from bsmith648@btinternet.com or www.sunbeam-mcc.co.uk

29 June: Motorcycles at the Manor at West Ashby Manor, West Ashby, near Horncastle, Lincs (LN9 5PY). More info' from motorcyclesatthemanor@gmail.com or Facebook.

29 June: Ride to Remember from Winchester Auto Barn, Sutton Scotney, Winchester, Hants (SO21 3NS) at 9.30am. More info' from Facebook.

29 June: Scooter Day at the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley Cross Road, near New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info' from www.sammymiller.co.uk

29 June: NCC Cambs' Custom & Classic Bike Show at Foreman's, March Rd, Ring's End, Wisbech, Cambs (PE13 4DB). Tickets £3. More info' from Facebook.

29 June: East Coast Harley Club's Custom Show at The Thurton George & Dragon, The St, Thurton, Norfolk (NR14 6AL). More info' from Facebook.

30 June: Ride Out to Cassington Bike Night at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

30 June: Cassington Bike Night at Cassington, Oxon. More info' from Facebook.

JULY

3 July: Late Night at Krazy Horse, Lamdin Rd, Lark Valley Dr, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk (IP32 6NU). More info' from www.krazyhorse.co.uk

4-6 July: Antelope MCC's Rally at Barker Butts RFC, The Bob Coward Memorial Ground, Pickford Grange Ln, Coventry (CV5 9AR). Tickets £15 weekend or £5 days. More info' from Facebook.

4-6 July: MPH Vintage Sprint at RAF Deenthorpe, near Weldon, Northants (NN17 3AN). Weekend tickets £65, Sunday day ticket £15. More info' from www.mphvintagesprint.co.uk

4-6 July: Leviathan MCC's Billy Goat Rally at Wigton RUFC, Lowmoor Rd, Wigton, Cumbria (CA7 9QT). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info' from 07974 350810 or Facebook.

4-6 July: Future RC's Clay Pigeon Rally at the South Wingfield Social Club, High Rd, South Wingfield, Derbys (DE55 7LX). Tickets £15 prebook or £20 on gate. More info' from mark.hd@btinternet.com or Facebook.

4-6 July: AMOC Sussex's Independence Rally at The Fishbourne Centre, Blackboy Lane, Fishbourne, Chichester, W. Sussex (PO18 8BE). More info' from Facebook.

5 July: NCC London Diamond Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

5 July: Shelsey Walsh Bike Bonanza at Shelsey Walsh, Worcs (WR6 6RP). More info' from www.shelsleywalsh.com

5 July: Tiger MCC Kilmarnock's Custom Show at Kilmarnock Rugby Club, Queen's Dr, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland (KA1 3XF). More info' from Facebook.

5 July: CCW's Show Us What You've Got Again Custom Show at The Cage, Park Road, Rhosymedre, Wrexham, Clywd, Wales (L14 3YR). More info' from Facebook.

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No Colours to be worn on site please
No glass allowed on site • No fireworks

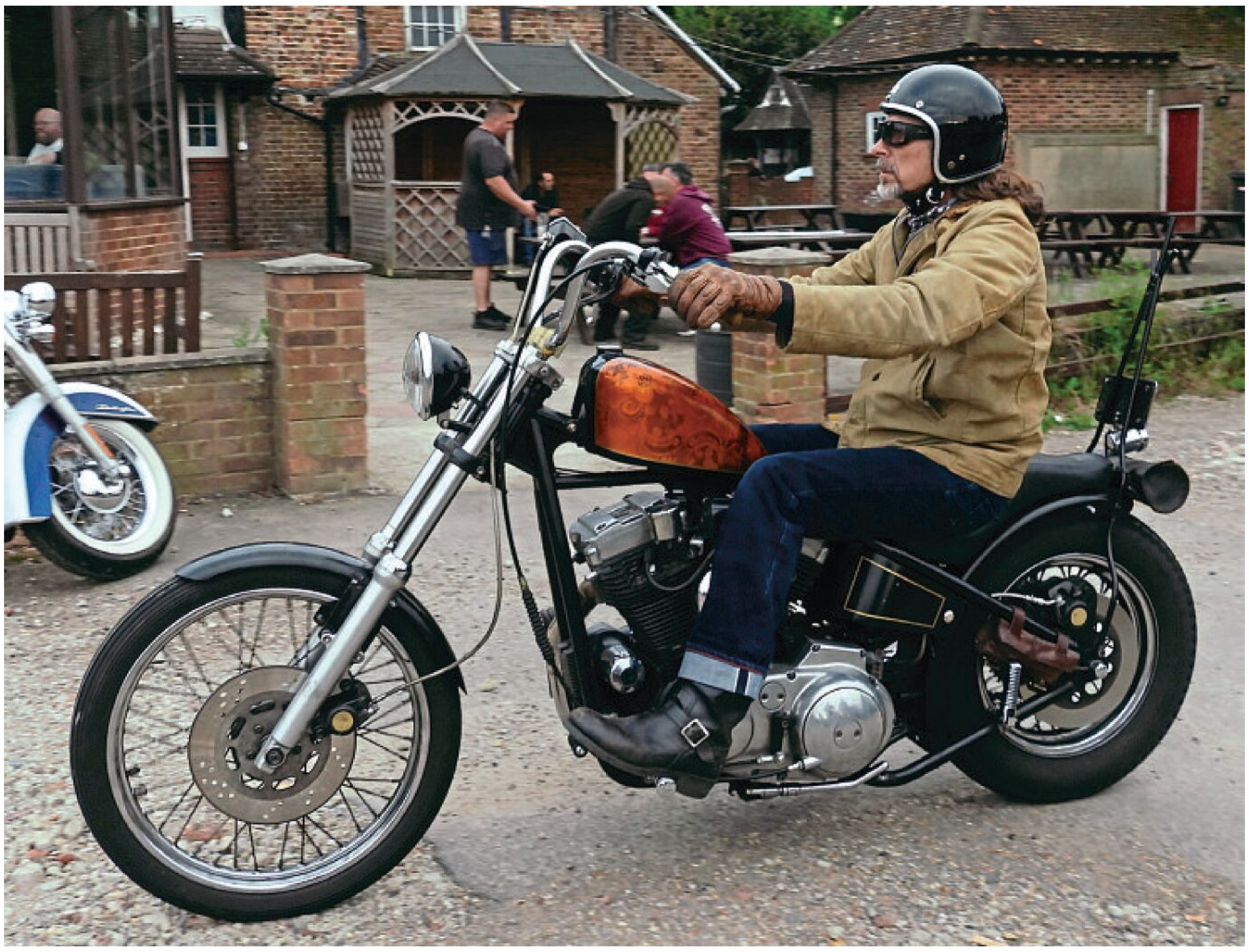
Readers' Lives

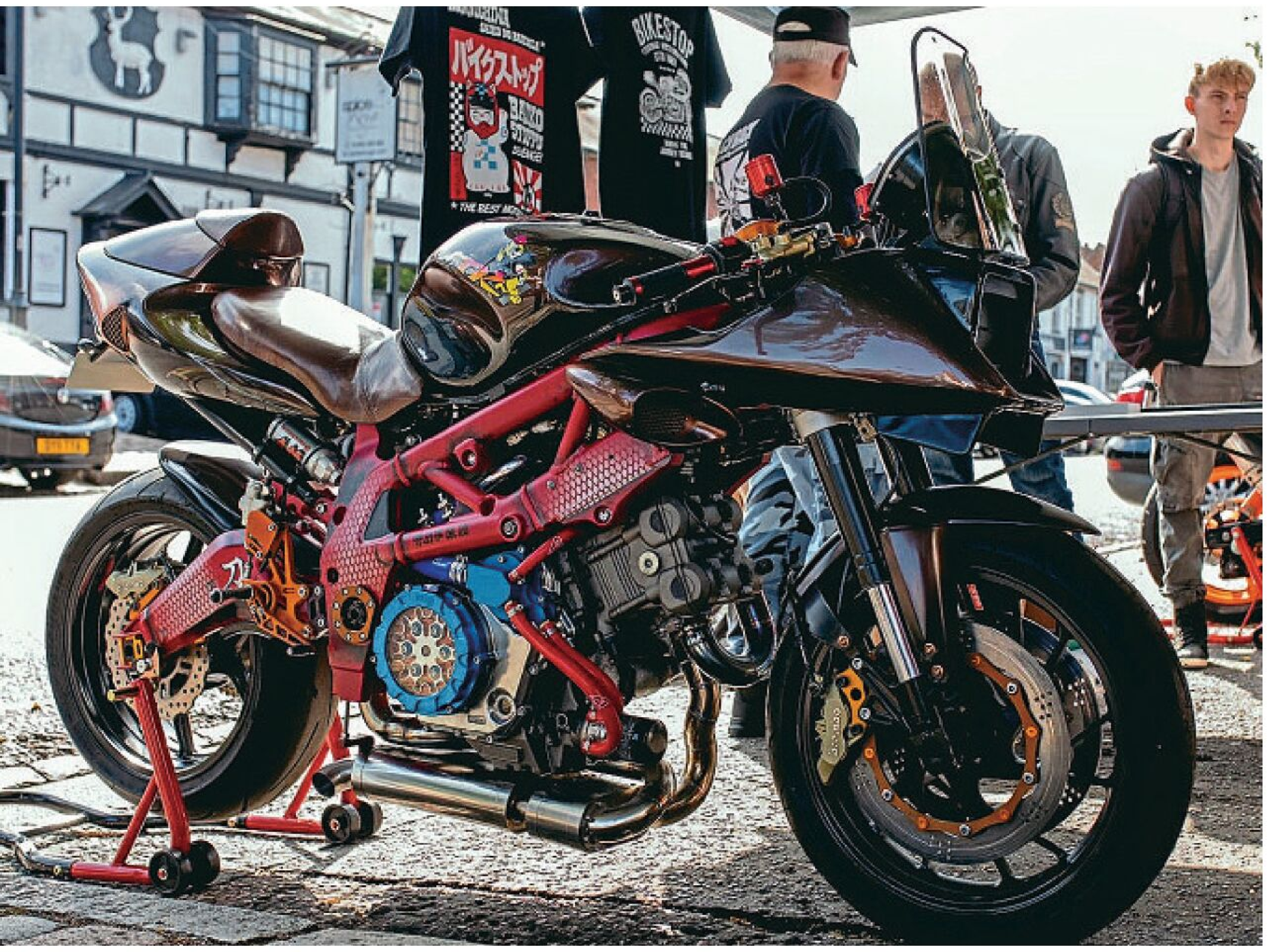
SEND PICS OF YOUR BIKE, YOUR LADY, YOUR BLOKE (BUT NOT YOUR DINNER, THIS ISN'T FACEBOOK) TO **NIK@BACKSTREETHEROES.COM**

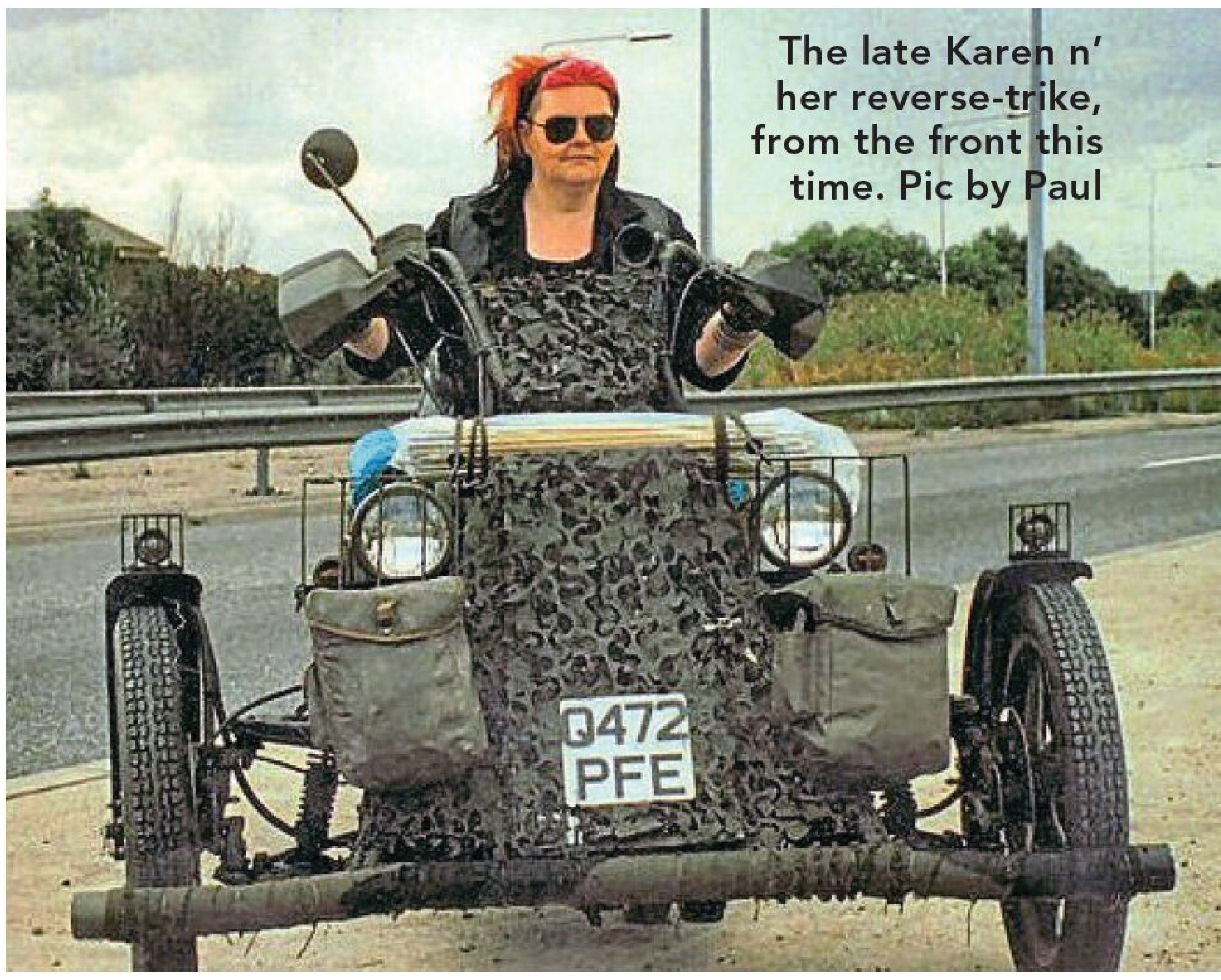
BEERS
BIKES
&
BANDS
THE BULLSHEAD AT SMALLWOOD

ABOVE: The perfect way to spend an afternoon, says Paul

RIGHT: Sporty chop n' rider by Ian Evans





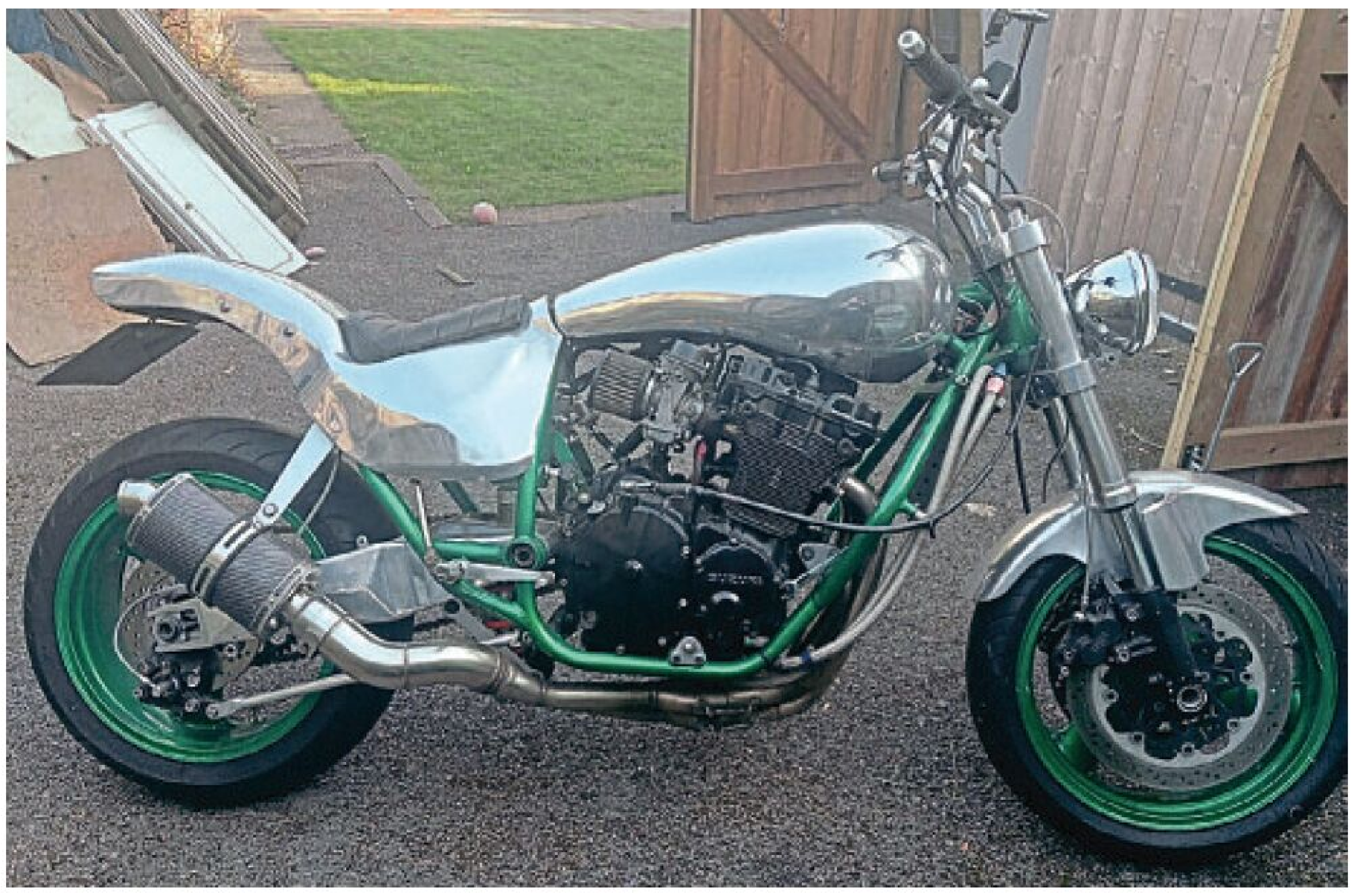


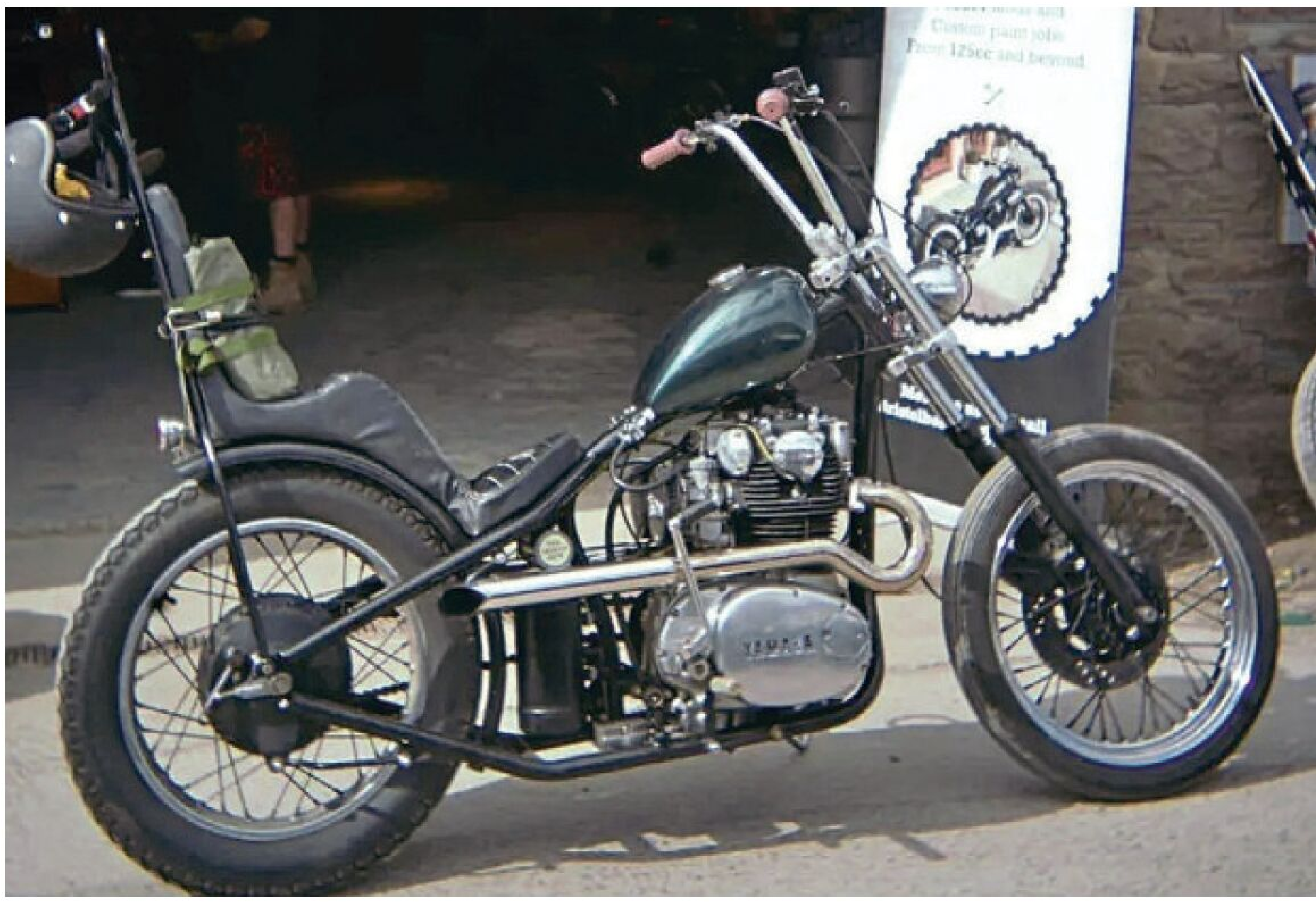
The late Karen n' her reverse-trike, from the front this time. Pic by Paul

LEFT: Hilly, who draws the cover bike caricatures, did a bit on this TL1000 with Katana bodywork, Benelli fan under seat, Kwak forks and front wheel, Aprillia swingarm, and Honda rear wheel – it's called Top Kat and was all home-built in a shed

BELOW: Dermot's GSX-R 750's been featured twice in BSH – not surprised!

RIGHT: John Dunne's new (well, to him anyway) XS650 chop – old skool kool!



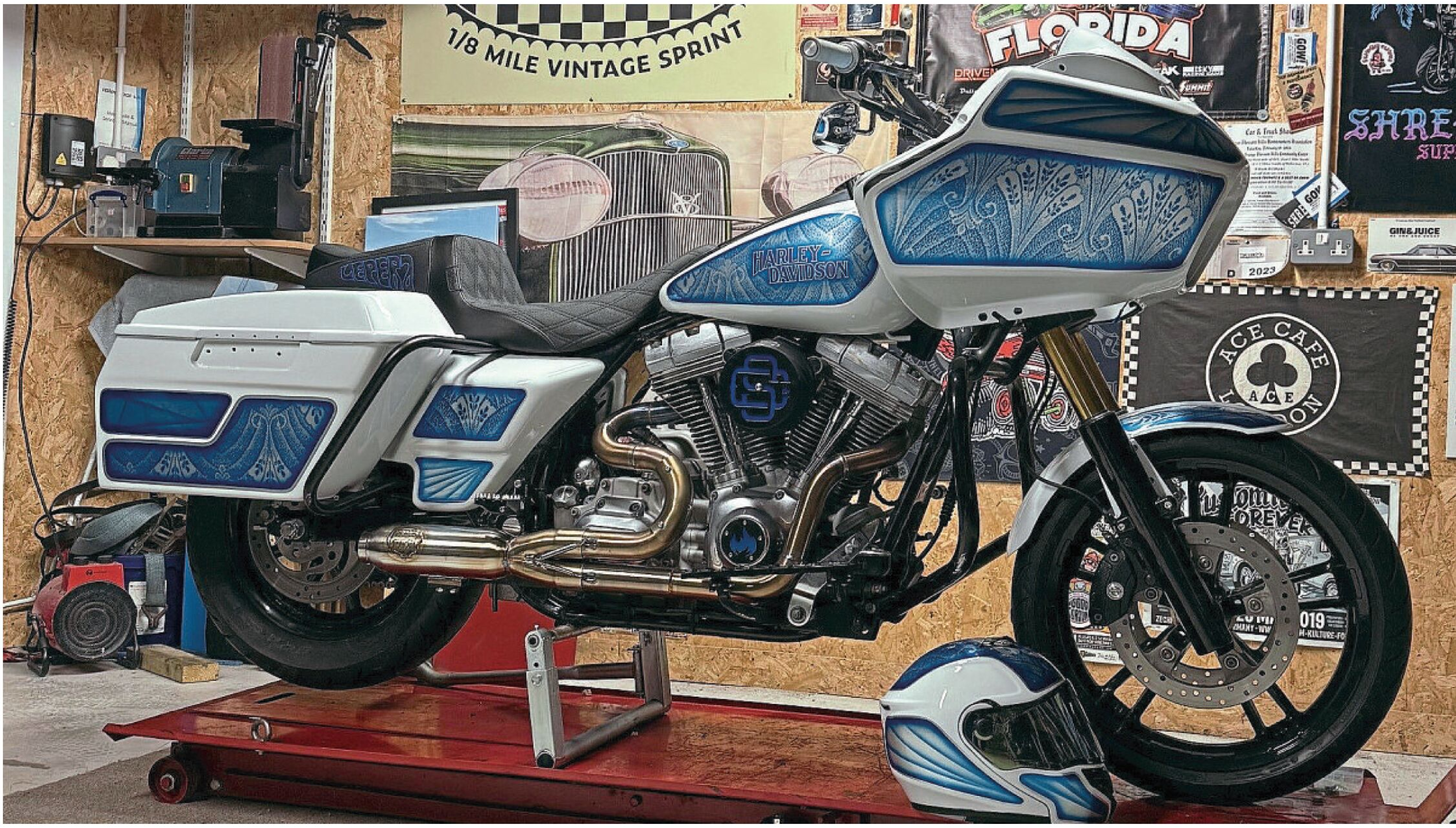


TRADING
ACME
COMPANY

LEFT: Comes with free anvil and stick of dynamite! Pic by Laurie

ABOVE: Tidy bobbed AJS at TTT Motorcycle Village in Sudbury, spotted by Mark

BELOW: James' stunt/performance-style bagger, built from an imported Road Glide, and painted, too, by him


1/8 MILE VINTAGE SPRINT
FLORIDA
HARLEY-DAVIDSON
ACE CAFE
GIN&JUICE

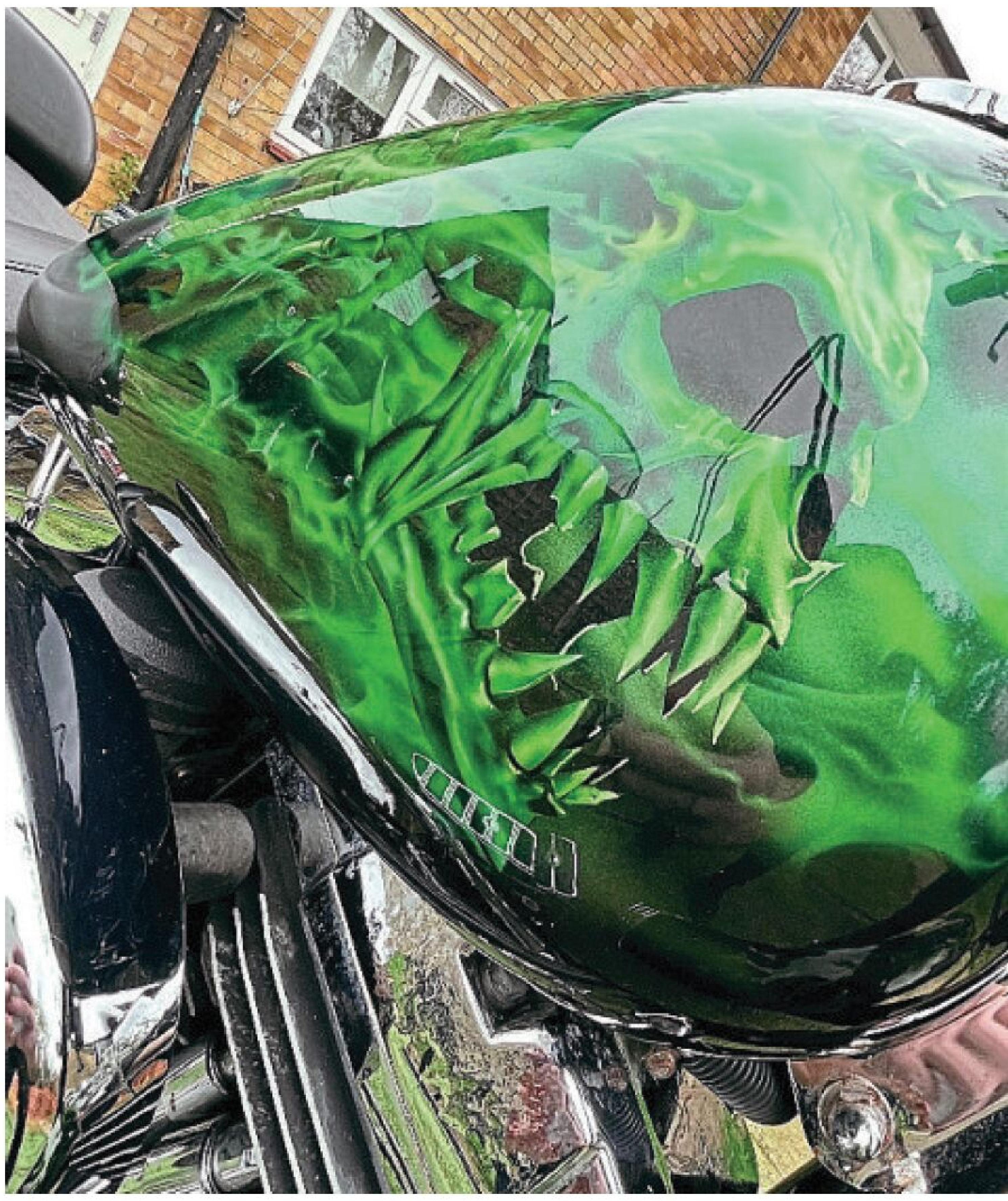
LEFT: Couple o' nice café racers, proper ones wi'out brown seats, at Vintage Metals

BEST PIC EACH MONTH WINS A PAIR OF THESE:
OXFORD
ORIGINAL APPROVED
SINGLE LAYER JEANS FOR MEN AND WOMEN, WORTH
£129.99

ABOVE: Suzi's Sporty, all up and running, while her other 'alf Abo's is still on the bench

Hooky's custom Fat Boy,240 rear end, gloss black paint with metallic grey Mustang stripe by Celtic Customs of Perth

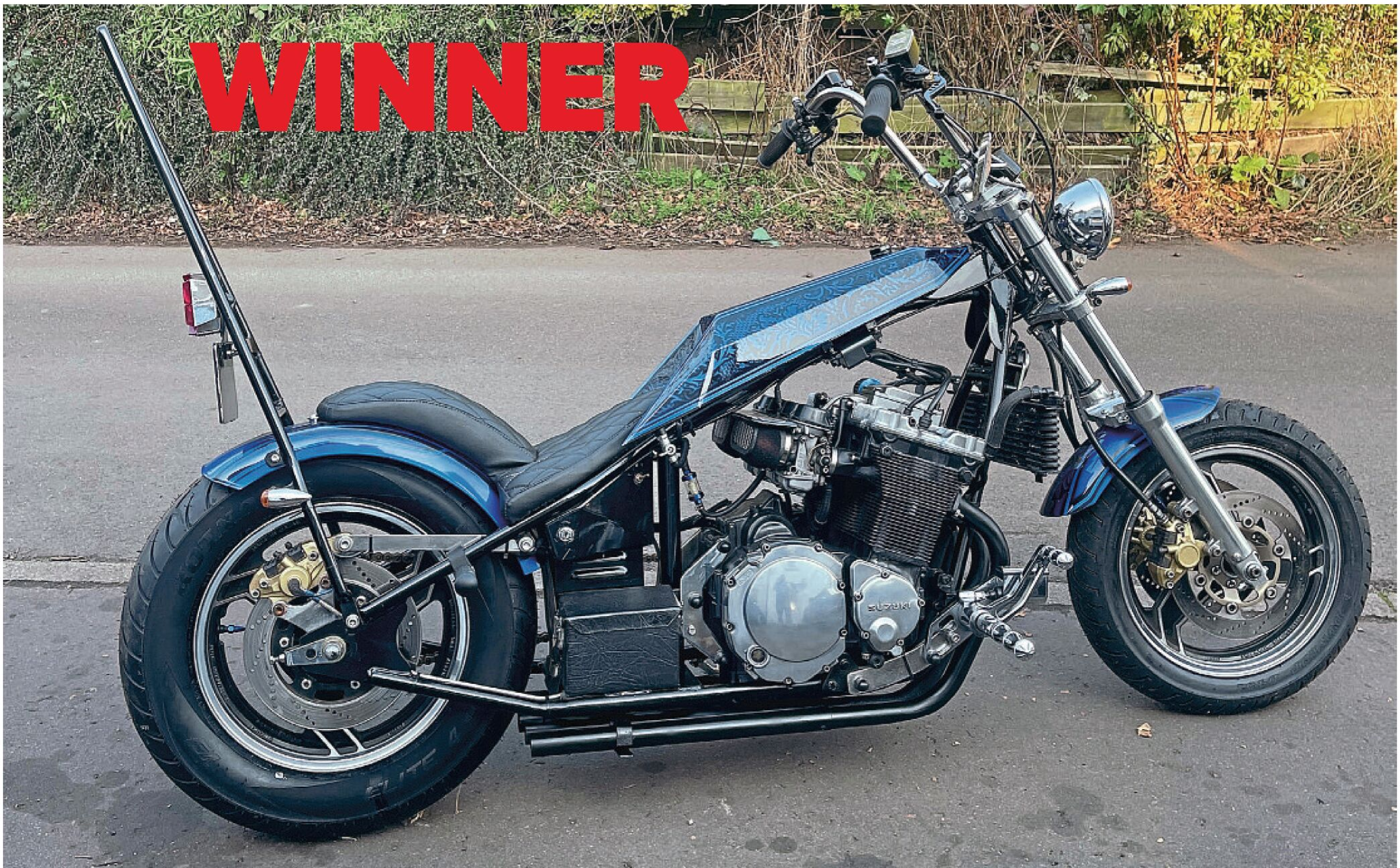
LIFES TOO SHORT FOR CRAP COFFEE

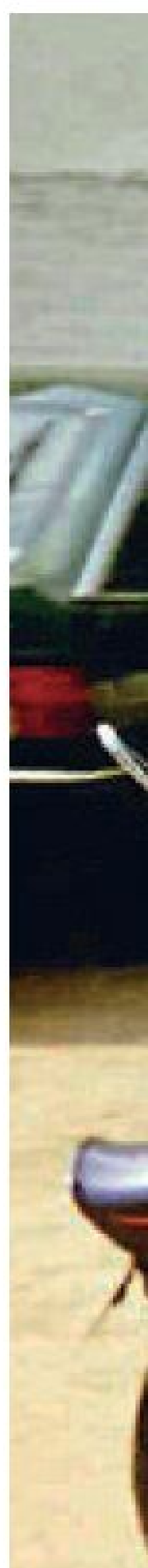


ABOVE: Bike night at The Gasket, by Paul Kelly

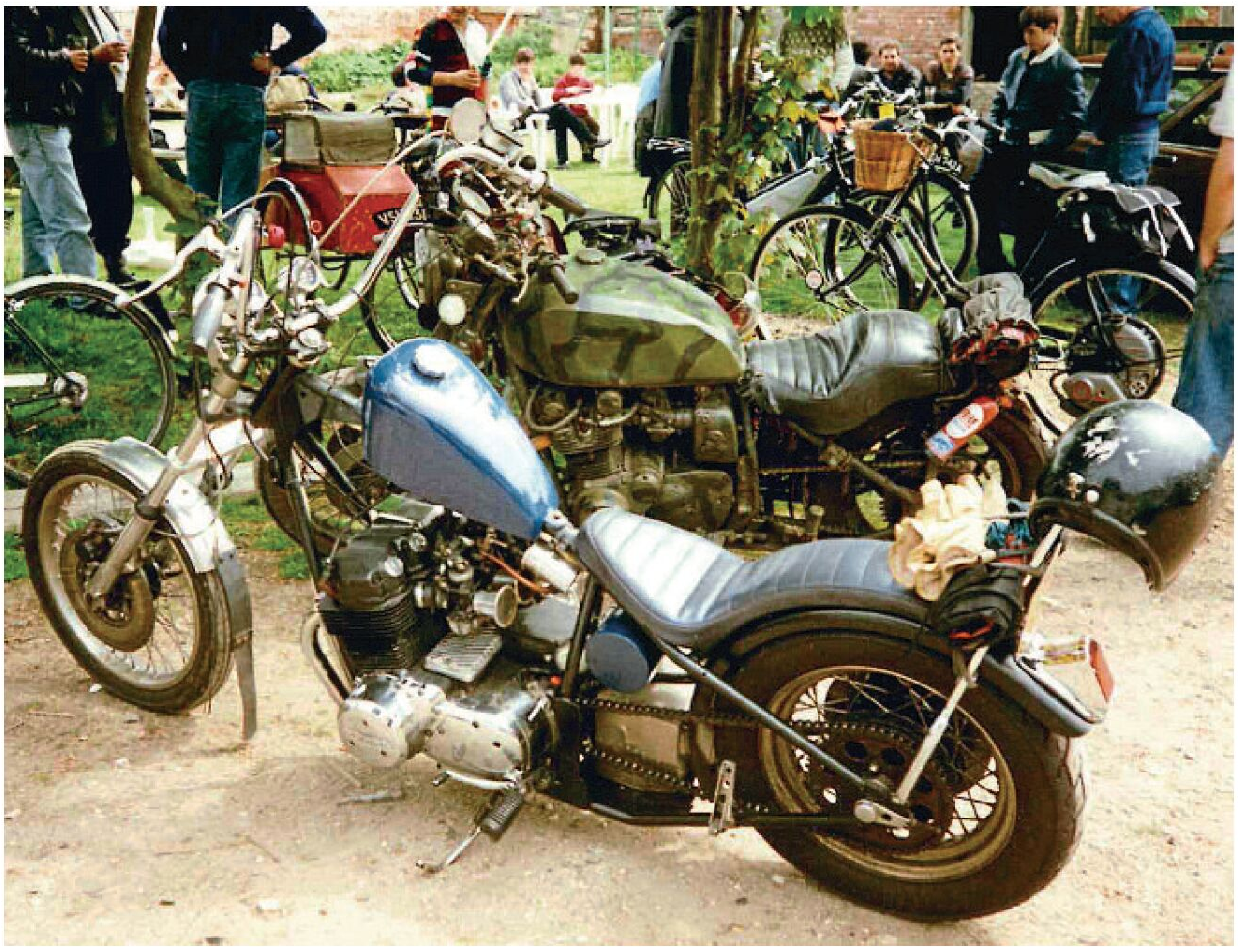
BELOW: Gav Pitts' GSX-R digger – bet he's sick of people saying "You won't get far on that tank"…

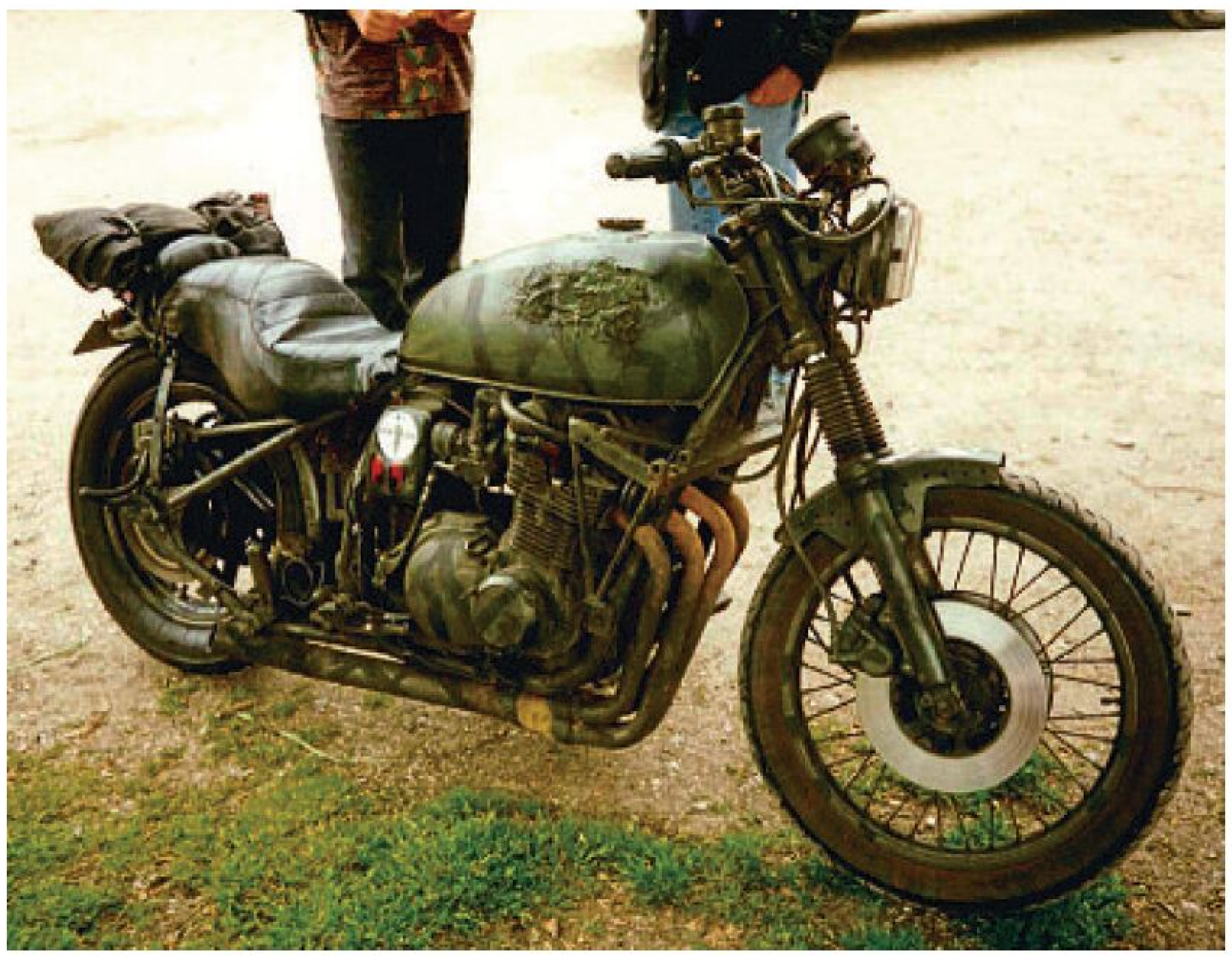
RIGHT: Amazing paint on Gary's Heritage Softail


WINNER
SUZUKI



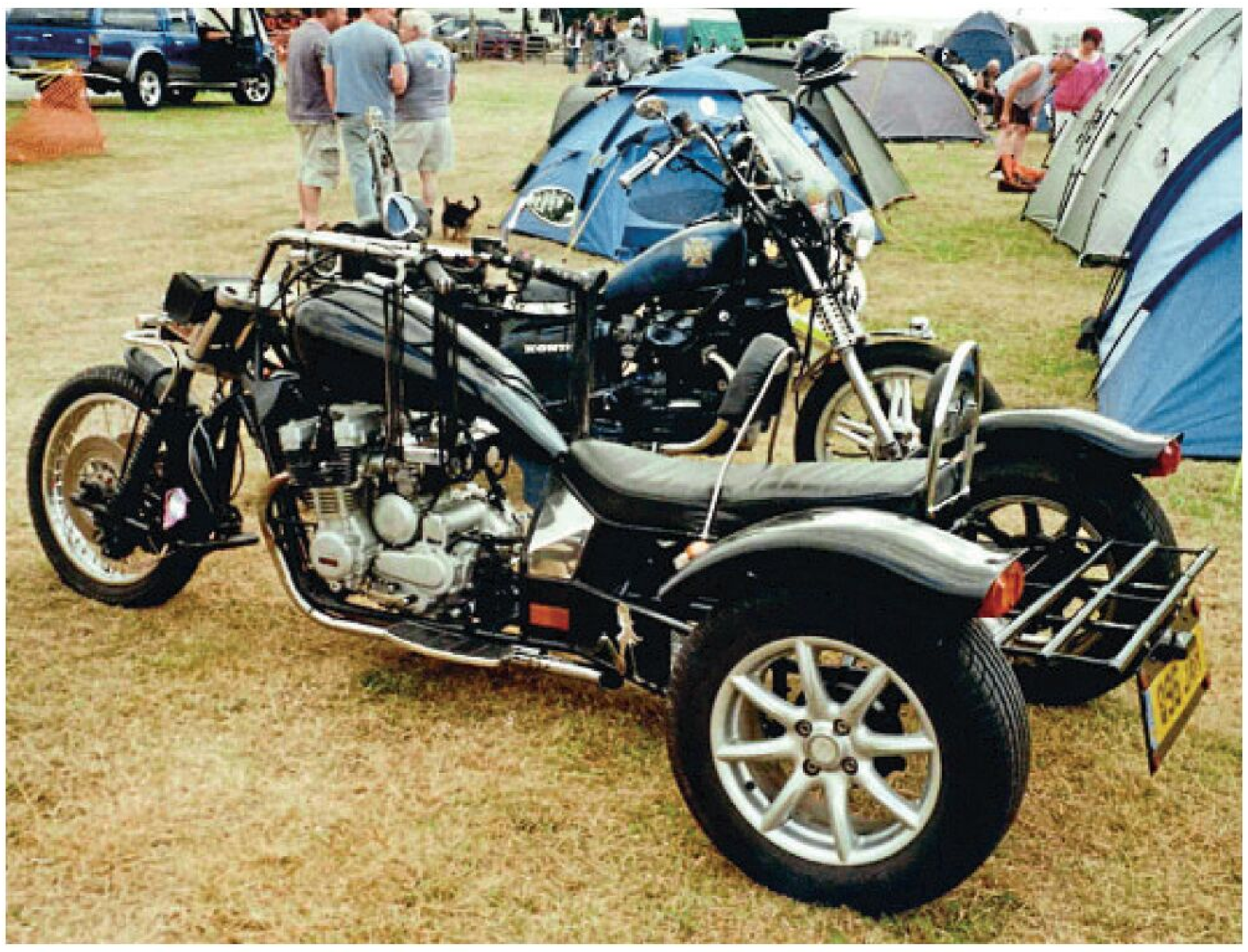
Gibby's ~~Readers'~~ Lives



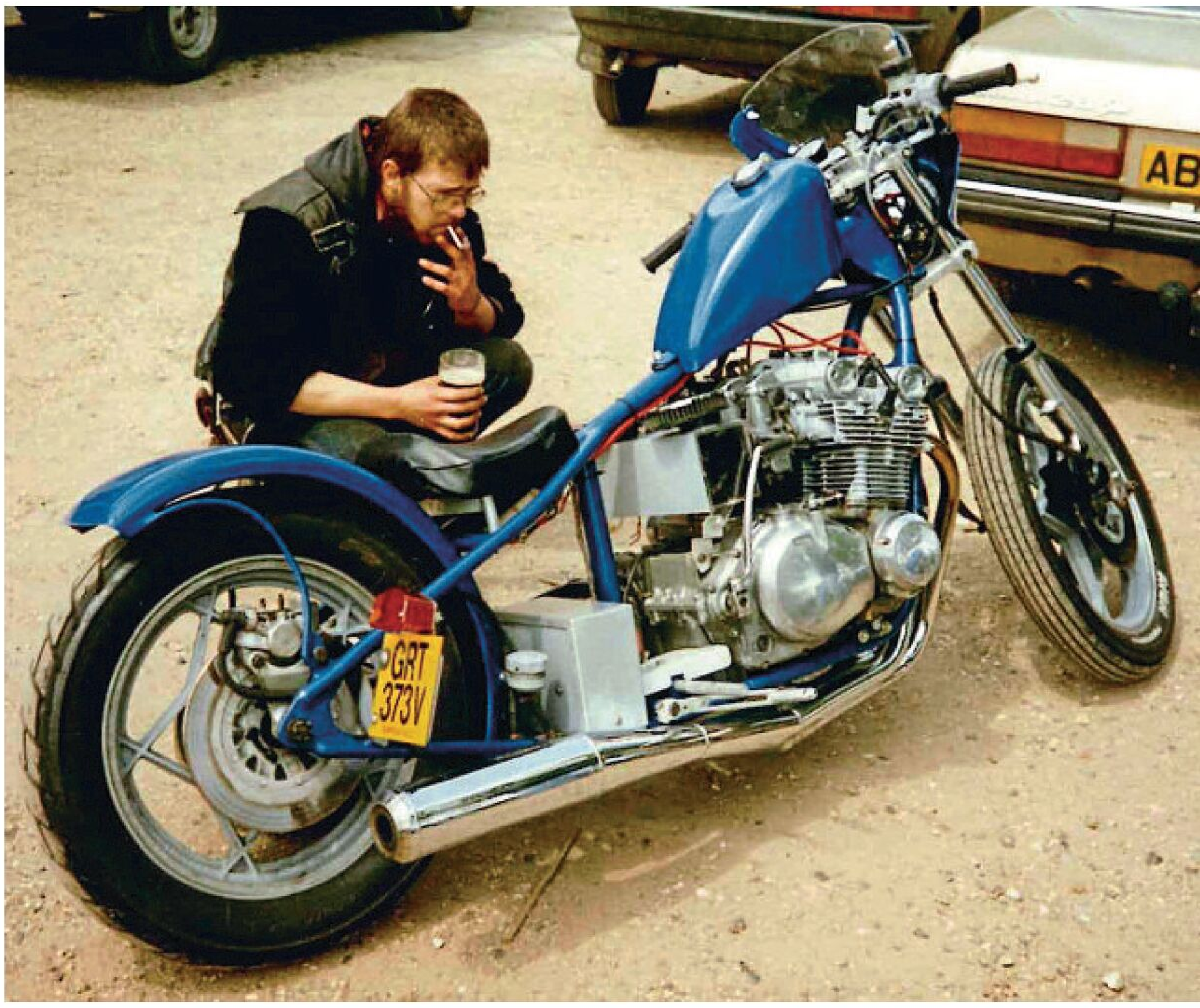


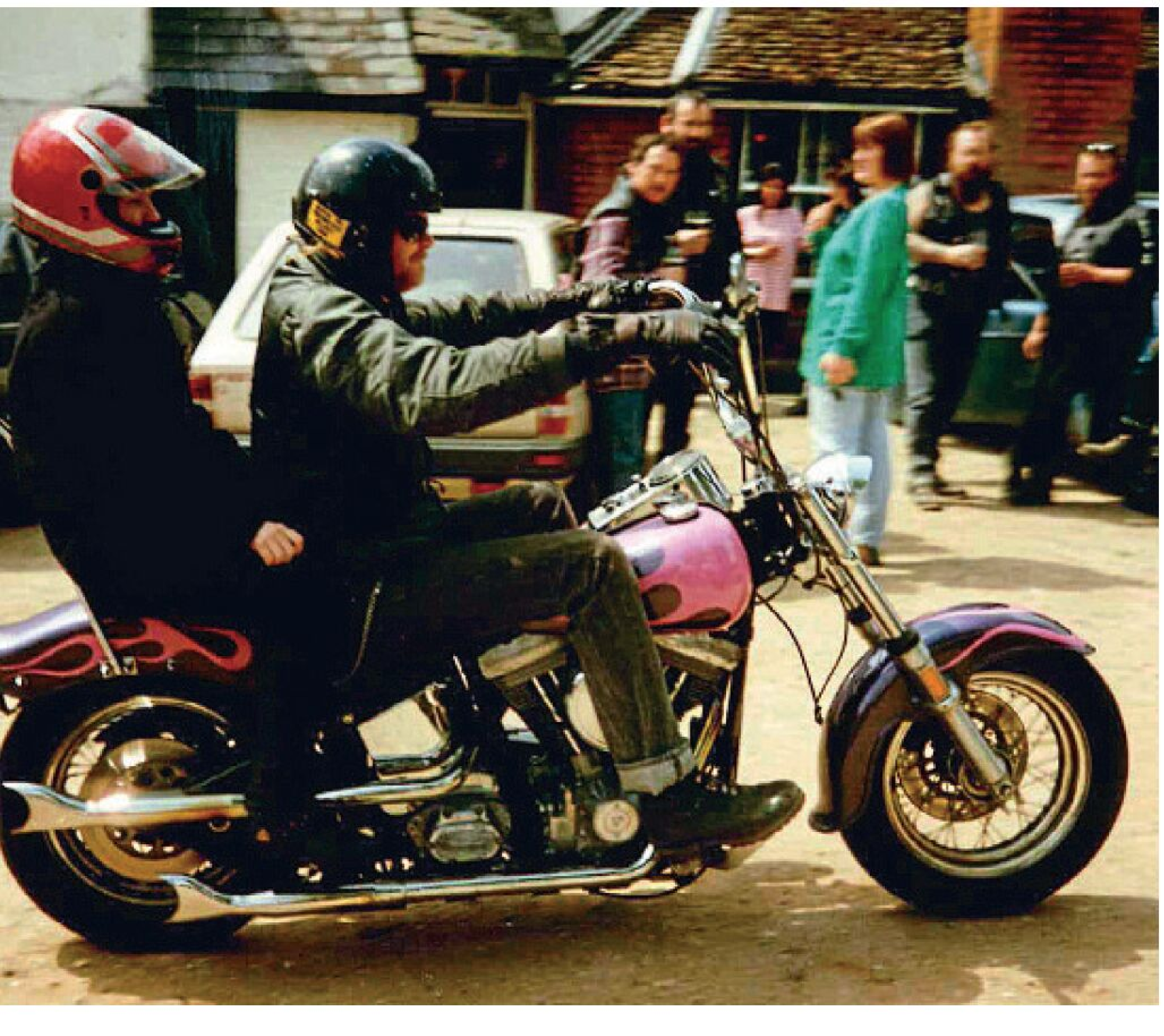
LEFT: Battered ol' 750/4 chop at The King's Head in Bildeston in the early 1990s… wonder if it's still going?

ABOVE: Mike Turner's GS at The King's Head in Bildeston in the early '90s… he's still got it, and keeps threatening to put it back on the road



ABOVE: Yam trike at the Black Shuck rally in '07





LEFT: Pink n' purple Evo at The King's Head in Bildeston in the early 1990s

ABOVE: GS chop at The King's Head in Bildeston in the early '90s… is that a very young Lenny looking at it?

BEST PIC EACH MONTH WINS A PAIR OF THESE:
OXFORD
AA
ORIGINAL APPROVED
SINGLE LAYER JEANS FOR MEN AND WOMEN, WORTH
£129.99

Motorcycle Action Group

> **"DOING BUSINESS WITHOUT ADVERTISING IS LIKE WINKING AT A GIRL IN THE DARK. YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING, BUT NOBODY ELSE DOES."**
>
> STEUART HENDERSON BRITT,
> PROFESSOR OF MARKETING

Sometime in the mid-1990s I sent the mighty Honda a present. It was an advertising jingle written to the tune of the 1965 Beach Boys hit 'Help Me Rhonda', but replacing the main lyric with 'Get a Honda, go get a Honda'.

Along with it I gave them a script for the TV advert I wanted them to run. It started with a handsome young guy pulling up on a Honda motorcycle at a nice suburban home somewhere in America, probably southern California, where, outside, stood another Honda. Out of the house came an attractive young woman in full leathers who proceeded to mount her bike as her mother returned from shopping on her Honda step-thru, just in time to give her daughter a small bag of stuff to take on the trip. In the background, meanwhile, her dad is washing his full-dress Gold Wing.

Off ride the guy and the girl on a beautiful sunny California morning, through the 'burbs and out into the country. All along the way they encounter other Honda riders, all smiling, cheery, and enjoying themselves, riding every model Honda has on the market. Eventually they arrive at the beach to meet their friends, all of whom have ridden there on their own Hondas, and it ends with the sun going down over the ocean, California's coast facing west, while the friends sit around a beach barbecue, their bikes parked all around them.

Might my effort have got me an award at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, the advertising industry's answer to the Oscars, or a job offer on Madison Avenue? Probably not. Was I just a crazy Honda enthusiast? Not at all. I'd only ever owned two Hondas: a C50 I rode illegally off-road as a kid, and then an H100A two-stroke which I bought in March 1981 – my first road bike which, amongst other adventures, took me on the best part of a 500-mile round trip to Box Hill and back. When I scripted the Honda ad, my main bike'd been my much-loved Suzuki GS850 that I'd bought back in early 1989, and which I ran right until I bought my Harley in 2010. It's been in dock ever since, but will be back on the road one day as it richly deserves. No, I had no particular allegiance to Honda – I just figured that, as the biggest and richest of the manufacturers, they were the ones most likely to be willing to spend some money advertising their own products. I wasn't expecting a medal, even less any money, but I didn't even get the courtesy of a reply.

Over the years a lot of the most involved people in the riders' rights movement have lamented the lack of advertising by the manufacturers and importers, and I know some of them repeatedly urged the MCIA to pass the hat around to fund a generic ad promoting motorcycling per se. Whilst that sounds like a noble idea, it was always going to be a non-starter for the simple reason that, yes, it was a noble idea, and noble ideas do not excite businessmen. If I recall correctly, the MCIA did fund one anaemic and short-running advert that used the slogan 'Free with every motorcycle sold – you'. As anyone who knew anything about advertising could have predicted though, it failed to change anything. One-off ads rarely pay for themselves unless they're luckily well-timed enough to tap into some current gold mine of a trend. No, advertising only works by continual investment, by sticking at it. Giants like Coca-Cola and Unilever are giants for a reason – their ad-spend is enormous and ongoing, year-in, year-out, no matter what happens. There was never going to be any long-term sustained effort by the MCIA to promote motorcycles generically for one simple reason – what turns on any businessman is the prospect of making more money by increasing the size of their market as a whole, and by increasing their share of that market. Ask the boss of Honda to chip in for a generic ad promoting motorcycles and he thinks, 'but what if the audience buys other firms' bikes instead of ours?', and the boss of every other manufacturer and importer thinks the same.

That was why, as MAG's Chairman throughout the 1990s, I refused to be one of the people blathering on futilely for such an advert. I figured we should appeal to the naked hard-nosed self-interest that makes any real businessman successful. I put myself in the shoes of Honda's boss and said: "Okay, with everyone struggling and nobody else advertising, the market is wide open for us to clean up. Now is the time to invest." And an investment it would've been, not a gamble, and I believe it would've been a successful investment, and it could've been the beginning of a turnaround in the entire motorcycle market. Why? Because where Honda'd led, if they had led, others would've followed – Suzuki would've advertised Suzies, Yamaha Yams, Kawasaki Kwaks, and the rest. Hell, even Triumph and Harley might've put their hands in their pockets. It could've been back to the '60s and '70s, when they sold more than a million bikes a year, with every one of them fighting to put the latest tech and styling before their buying public. Television could've become the broadcast equivalent of Newcastle's Westgate Hill. It never happened though, as nobody had the imagination. Nobody had the balls. People who claimed to be businessmen, and who posed as such, were nothing of the sort, and that, more than any other reason, is why we're where we are today. For motorcycling to survive, the guys who get a paycheck from it need to start earning it, but they aren't.

NEIL F. LIVERSIDGE
MAG NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

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devil's advocate

/dev.əlz 'æd.və.kət/

A person who expresses an opinion that disagrees with others so that there'll be an interesting discussion about an issue – teachers often play devil's advocate to provoke discussion in the classroom.

OPEN YOUR MIND'S EYE FOR A SECOND AND PICTURE THIS: A RAKED FRAME HELD UP BY EIGHT-INCH-OVER GIRDERS, A PEANUT TANK PERCHED AT JUST THE RIGHT ANGLE ON A SINGLE TOP-TUBE, ITS GLITTERY BLUE PAINT CROWNED BY AN INTRICATE MURAL AND SUBMERGED BENEATH AN OCEAN OF POLISHED LACQUER, HEAVILY-ENGRAVED ENGINE CASES BATHED IN NICKEL AND CHROME, POLISHED FORWARD CONTROLS HIGH AN' WIDE RESIDING UP FRONT, AND A HAND-STITCHED AND INTRICATELY CARVED BLACK LEATHER SADDLE OPPOSING THEM AT THE BACK.

What do you think it is? A Harley of some sort? Maybe Swedish? Perhaps a Triumph or something a little less common, possibly an A10 or Norton single? No, sorry, the picture your mind's eye should've painted for you's one depicting a 1968 Lambretta. Hmm, not easy this game, is it?

I found myself both a little saddened and confused last week which, I'll admit, does seem to be something of a recurring theme – I was also going to say 'surprised' but, in truth, I really wasn't, so I won't. This bout of confused sadness started when some people began expressing their opinion that a chop built from a scooter wasn't in fact a chop at all or, if it was, then it had no rights appearing on the same figurative stage as one derived from a motorcycle.

Of course, my initial reaction was to simply think, 'bell-end', as you would, but they then went on to clarify their stance, although it didn't really help their cause.

Apparently, scooters, whether they be Lambretta, Vespa, or any other make are, in fact, 'hair dryers' and not, as I'd always thought, a form of two-wheeled motor vehicle. I was also shocked to discover that it wasn't the year 2025 as I believed, but actually 1964 – just think, you'll be able to watch England win the World Cup in two years' time… I'd put a bet on now. Their belief seemed to be that motorcycle and scooter riders are undeniably different, and any common ground is merely superficial, or an unhappy coincidence that should be disregarded and denied rather than celebrated and enjoyed. I know what you're thinking, because I thought the same, and you're right – it really is hard to imagine that there's anyone with enough cockwomble DNA to actually believe any of that sixty-year-old, tabloid-fuelled nonsense, but it seems there is.

You know, not everyone who peers at life awkwardly through a narrow crack is a gynaecologist, and some people actually choose to go through their three-score-years-and-ten wearing self-imposed blinkers. They're not blind – they've simply decided to close their eyes to anything that doesn't adhere strictly to their own constricted ideals, no matter how self-limiting they are. To dismiss something simply because of its country of origin, fork length, or tyre size is to deny the time, effort, skill, and imagination that went into its creation and, to be frank, it's also the perfect way to make yourself look a bit of a dick.

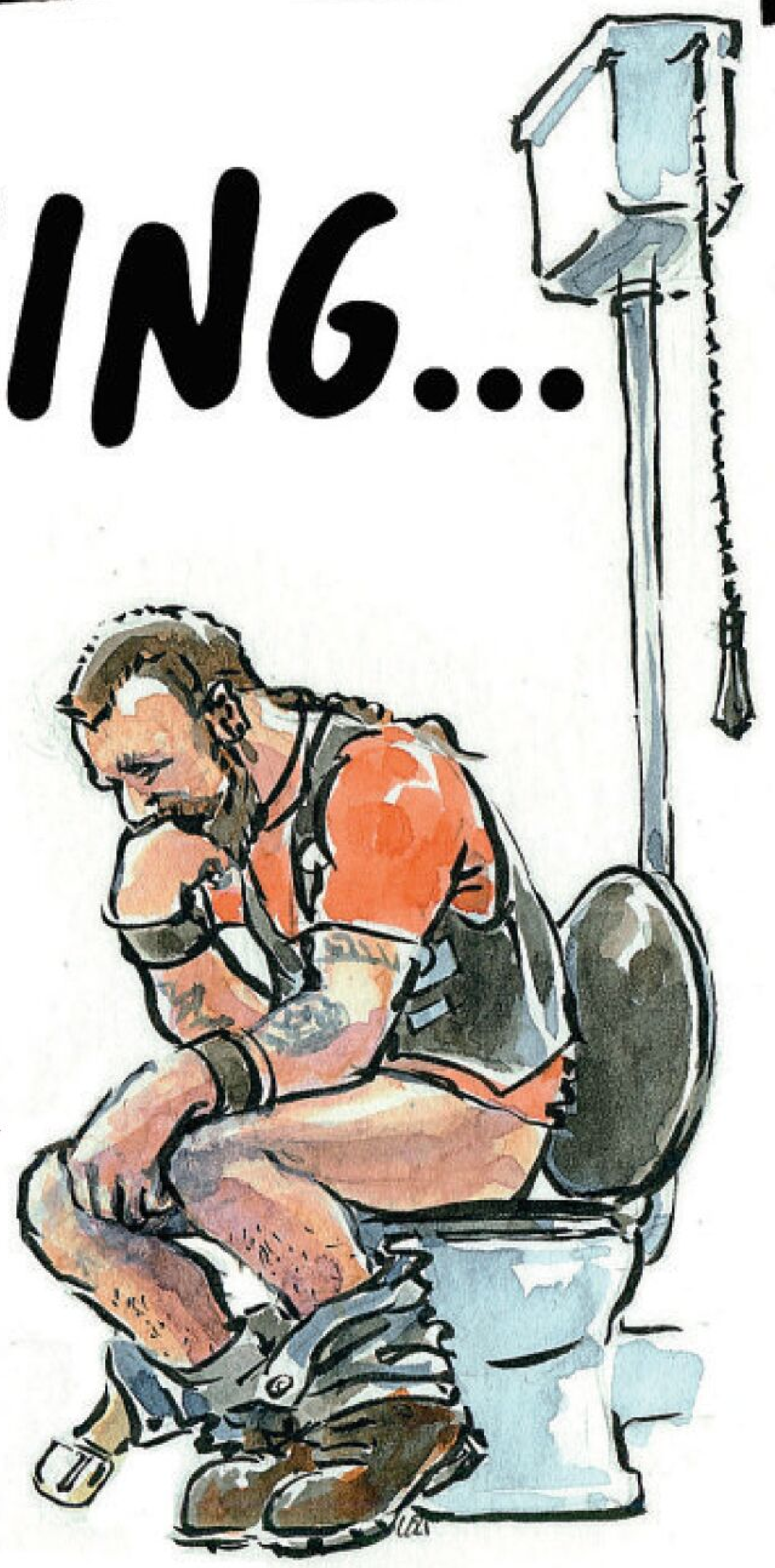
It doesn't really matter what something starts its life as – it's how it finishes it that's important. A well-thought-out and skilfully executed bracket's still a nice bracket no matter what it's on. It's a theory that works just as well in reverse, too – welding a piece of angle-iron, that looks like it was cut out with a knife and fork, to a twenty grand Harley doesn't stop it from being a shite bracket, does it?

Those who create tend to appreciate creation, so could it be that those who don't (create, that is) have less appreciation, which makes unfounded criticism easier? Having no understanding of how difficult it is to build a chopper, or any other bike, out of something that really, really doesn't want to be one perhaps means this peculiar attitude's easier to express? Then again, perhaps it simply proves that ignorance's so often the basis for misguided bigotry? Deep this month, innit?

Of course, some people'll continue to believe that the example described above has no place in the custom bike world, and if you're of that mind, I have neither the will or crayons required to dissuade you. It doesn't really matter, in my book, that perhaps it's not as legitimate as Captain America or Billy's Panhead but, in my experience, if something looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's probably a duck.

NORM

REMINISCING...



WHEN ONE LOOKS BACK ON ONE'S FORMATIVE YEARS (HE SAYS, TRYING TO SOUND ALL WISE AND LEARNED), ONE REALISES THAT WHAT ONE REALLY DID WAS MAKE A BIT OF A PRAT OF ONESELF. I MEAN, EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES, I KNOW, BUT HOW COME I MADE SO MANY?

Back in the '80s, no idea what year, I had a GS550. It was just a GS550, not a nice GS550, not a trick GS550, not a custom GS550, just a GS550. I was young, and it was cheap and, oddly, I have absolutely no recollection of what happened to it; I'm guessing I sold it, but I've no idea who to, and why, or what I bought afterwards. What I do remember, though, usually suddenly, at 3am, in a cold sweat at the thought of what might've happened, is this…

The Rising Sun in Newmarket was for years the local biker pub – a real biker pub like we don't really get any more; a lounge bar where (relatively) normal people drank, a rear bar where all us scruffy reprobates hung out, and a dark back room, its walls covered in bike and band posters, with a jukebox, and a pool table*. It had a car park outside that funnelled down to a narrow pedestrian alley with a bollard to stop motorcycles going down it, and on a Friday and Saturday night was so packed with bikes that, if you parked at the far end, it'd be best part of half-an-hour after closing time (and this was in the days when pubs closed at 10.30pm) before you could leave. It was a great place for a fledgling biker, and meself and a couple o' three good mates loved it there.

The etiquette, sort o' thing, was, if there was a space directly outside the entrance, to roar up, jab on the brakes at the last sec' (always a risk on cobbles), and rev the engine loudly before shutting off (something that was to backfire expensively, according to legend, on the owner of a brand-new GPz750 Turbo when he did just that, cutting the oil feed to the turbo and having it explode underneath him). It was biker cool, y'know, what you did, and everyone did it.

One evening, as I pulled up on the GS, quite early, there was a space, and so I went for it – wahhh up to the entrance, clutch in, vroom and… the clutch cable snapped, sending me uncontrollably forward into the pub. How I didn't fall off as the front, and then the rear, wheel(s) bumped up the high step, or when the front wheel smacked into the pillar in the middle of the floor (thankfully it was a warm evening and the doors were open), is something I don't know to this day, or how I didn't hit anyone going from the bar to the back room with a pint. When everything finally stopped moving (which felt, to me, like an eternity as time'd slowed down as it always does in these circumstances, but was, in reality, two or three seconds tops), and I found myself still upright, I looked to the left towards the bar, and saw the landlord stood behind it looking at me. "Pint of Tartan is it, Nick?" (I was just Nick back then as I hadn't yet discovered the fun to be had writing your name with the back tyre). I nodded, and got off shakily, and stood at the bar while, behind me, the GS rested on its side-stand, the motor ticking away its heat gently.

As I got towards the bottom of the glass, my heart rate starting to get back to normal, the landlord wandered over from serving someone else and said quietly: "Go and put it outside now, eh?" I nodded, finished me pint, and did so, and nothing more was ever said about it, although there were often remarks about the black tyre lines on the pub floor, and the black mark on the pillar, until they were scuffed away by people's feet.

God I miss that place!

NIK

---

*I'll tell you a story in which that pool table played a major part one day… no, not like that, y'filthy-minded get!

TRIKES & THE LAW

BUSTING URBAN MYTHS (2)

I've no doubt some folk'll argue vehemently about some of the content in this article, because some people really are resistant to having any of their existing beliefs and ideas challenged, even when good evidence is presented to disprove those believes and ideas. However, I can assure readers that the facts in this article've been diligently researched, and the sources quoted can easily be checked.

UNBODIED TRIKES

Where legislation refers to 'unbodied trikes', this means trikes where the riders're not enclosed within the vehicle. Trikes with fibreglass body kits, like those used in the past by Phoenix, and contemporary designs such as Boom, Rewaco, and Can-Am, where the body kit covers the machine but not the rider, are classed as 'unbodied trikes' (a standard, unmolested, Reliant Robin is a 'bodied' trike, because the driver/passengers're enclosed within the vehicle). To avoid confusion, all of the legislation quoted in this article appertains to unbodied trikes because, well, 99.9 per cent of all trikes're like this.

HELMETS

In the UK, it's a legal requirement that a motorcycle helmet must be worn when riding mopeds, motorcycles, and motorcycle/sidecar combinations on public roads. They must meet one of the following Safety Standards: British Standard BS 6658:1985 (and carry the BSI kitemark), or UNECE Regulation 22.05 (a European Economic Area member standard offering at least the same safety and protection as BS 6658:1985, and carry a mark equivalent to the BSI kitemark). Trikes're NOT included in this legislation and, therefore, it's NOT compulsory to wear a helmet of any kind when riding a trike, as rider or passenger. You can if you want to, of course, but you don't have to.

Source: **https://www.gov.uk/motorcycle-helmet-law**

SEATBELTS

There're some very persistent urban myths on this subject – some'll claim seatbelts're required on car-based trikes, but not motorcycle-based trikes, while others insist seatbelts must be used if crash helmets aren't being worn, and I've even heard people saying the use of seatbelts depends on whether you have a bike licence or a car licence. I've no idea which seriously polluted fountain of knowledge these ideas come from but, I can assure you, they're all utter nonsense!

Seatbelts aren't required for three-wheeled mopeds or scooters (like the Piaggio MP3, the Yamaha Tricity, and the like), tip-up occasional seats, any saddle-type seat that makes you sit astride the frame of the trike (rider or passenger) in a longitudinal plane – basically, if the rider and passengers sit like they do on a motorcycle, you don't need seatbelts.

However, if the rider and/or passenger(s) don't sit astride the frame like on a bike, seatbelts are compulsory – if you have a car-type driver's seat, you need a seatbelt and, where the passenger seats're mounted outboard (either side of the frame), and are forward-facing (which they will be 'cos having rear-facing seats'd be weird, wouldn't it?), as is the case on the majority of three- or four-seater trikes, each of those seats must be fitted with either a lap belt, a three-point lap and diagonal belt (static or inertia), a harness belt, a disabled person's belt, or a child restraint. That also means that if you have a single back seat wide enough to take two people, they both need to have seatbelts. On some car-based trikes (like the Beach Bastard style where a portion of the rear body and roof're retained) it's often the case that the rider sits astride the frame on a saddle-type seat while the passengers sit in the original rear car seat – in these circumstances, the rider's seat doesn't need a seatbelt, but the passengers' seats do.

I've personally witnessed the dreadful result of somebody being thrown from an outboard (not in-line) passenger seat when the rider had to make a sudden violent swerve to avoid a collision, so I cannot fault the validity of this legislation, and I strongly recommend the use of seatbelts on forward-facing outboard passenger seats, even if the trike pre-dates the legislation. You see, just to confuse things, this legislation may differ for trikes that were first used before 17 June, 1999 if they have an unladen weight of less than 410kg, but the legislation's changed several times between 1965 and 1999, and I've neither the space nor the inclination to detail them all in this article. Basically, if your trike's currently more than 26 years old, I'm afraid you'll need a tedious wade through the sources listed below to see what applies in your case.

It's a legal requirement that, where seatbelts're fitted, they must be used, even if the fitting of them was not a legal requirement – like a car, basically, if it has a seatbelt, you need to use it. And any seatbelt fitted to a vehicle in the UK must've been tested and approved to British or European standards – this's not always the case with seatbelts offered for sale online, so check before you buy. Again confusingly, on the rare occasion that a trike's been type-approved without seatbelts, they're MOT-compliant if there's evidence they're approved to 92/61/EEC or 2002/24/EC. This scenario's fairly unlikely, but there you go.

Sources: **https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mot-inspection-manual-for-private-passenger-and-light-commercial-vehicles/appendix-c-seat-belt-fitment-tables**

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/1959/schedules/made

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1986/1078/regulation/47

https://www.gov.uk/seat-belts-law

MIRRORS

Trikes must be fitted with both an offside and nearside exterior rear-view mirror (or more than one of each if you like), both of which must meet MOT adjustment requirements and vibration requirements. The diameter of their reflecting surface, if a circular mirror, must be not less than 94mm, and not more than 150mm, and, if they're not circular, their reflecting surface must be able to contain a 78mm diameter circle, and be no larger than 120mm x 200mm. They must also be fitted or set in such a way that the centre of the reflective surface is at least 280mm from the centre line of the vehicle with the handlebars in the straight-ahead position, and this legislation applies to all unbodied trikes, irrespective of when they were first registered.

Sources: **https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/1959/schedules/made**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6308ab748fa8f55361ddd828/motorcycle-single-vehicle-approval-inspection-manual.pdf

RICK HULSE

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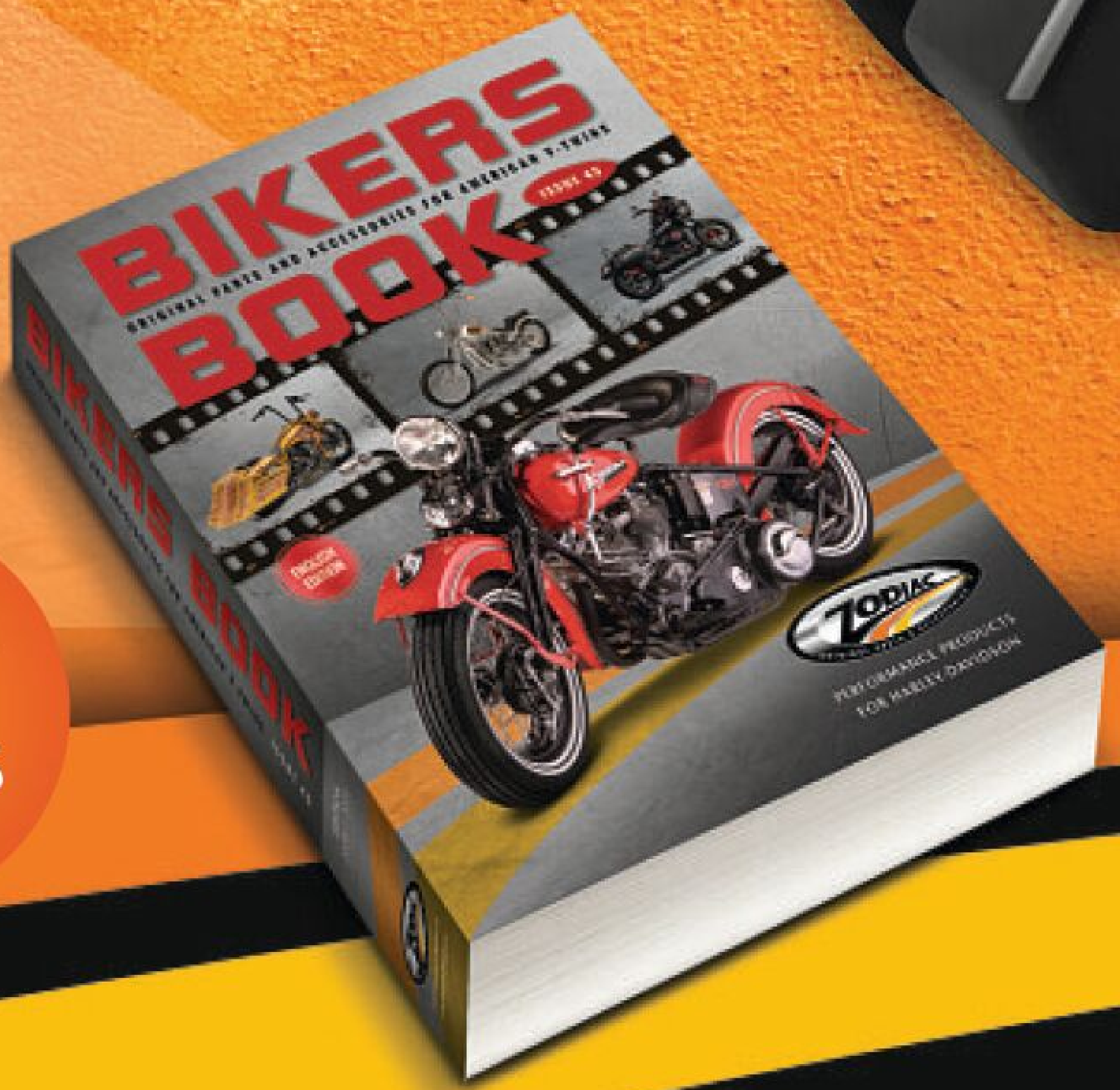
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